

I'M A
WIZARD,
MOM! A
SEER!

I LITERALLY HAVE SO
MUCH POWER THAT I MESSED
UP THE TEST AS A BABY!

I'VE ONLY GOT THE ONE SPELL OF MY OWN
FROM A MARK, BUT I'M A WAND MAKER WHO'S
A WALKING MAGIC POWER BATTERY!

AND EVEN IF I WASN'T, DAD'S A POWERFUL
WIZARD WITH THE GOVERNMENT, AND YOU'RE A
RENNED MONSTER HUNTER! I'M SUPPOSED
TO BELIEVE YOU WERE AFRAID FOR ME?!

YOU
WEREN'T
AFRAID!
YOU WERE
ASHAMED!

SO ASHAMED OF YOUR
WEAKLING SON THAT YOU
DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR
WIZARD DAUGHTER!

WHAT THE HELL COULD YOU HAVE BEEN SO AFRAID OF THAT YOU **AAAAAAH!**

turn
CLICK

turn
CLICK

turn
CLICK

turn
CLICK

turn
CLICK







WH... WHAT?

I MEAN, HE'S NOT MY DAD. HE DIDN'T RAISE ME, BUT "BIOLOGICAL FATHER" IS A MOUTHFUL.

WHO'S RAVEN?

DON'T INTERRUPT. FIGURE THINGS OUT FROM CONTEXT.

AND I'M ONE OF RAVEN'S DESCENDANTS, AND DISTANTLY RELATED TO DIANE.

HOW OLD IS THIS GUY?!

I'M TECHNICALLY SUSAN'S AUNT!

BUT WE THINK OF EACH OTHER LIKE SISTERS.

YOU'RE SUSAN'S AUNT?!

DAMMIT.

WAIT, SORRY. YOU ALL KNOW WHO RAVEN IS, RIGHT?

BECAUSE HE FOUGHT A BAD GUY AT M.S.H.S. LAST YEAR, AND IT INVOLVED NANASE AND ELLEN?

PLEASE SOMEONE ELSE NOT KNOW, TOO!

IS RAVEN A SUPER HERO?!

WELL, BECAUSE OF THAT, AND BECAUSE HE'S MY GODFATHER.

I TRIED TO DISENCHANT A GIANT BOAR WITH HIM ONCE.

DIDN'T GO GREAT.



HE WAS ALSO AT THE MALL. HE WARNED US ABOUT THE MONSTERS.

HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE.

HOW WAS HE? ASIDE FROM WORRIED ABOUT MONSTERS.

HE GOES BY "ZEUS" NOW.

DIDN'T JERRY USE "ZEUS" AS AN EXAMPLE OF A BAD NAME FOR AN IMMORTAL TO CHOOSE?

WHAT KIND OF AUTHORITY DO YOU HAVE ON PANDORA RETURNING AND BEING... UH...

MORE WHO SHE WAS?

THE WILL OF MAGIC ITSELF.

YOU'VE GOT WORD OF GOD ON THIS?!

NO CULTS!

SHE WON'T BE EXACTLY THE SAME, AND I GUESS NONE OF US KNEW HER THAT WELL...

BUT THE POINT IS, SHE'LL BE MORE "HER" THAN MOST RESET IMMORTALS.

Immortal

Calculations

Thinking

Grandmother

Father

↑↑↓↓
→←→
B A Start
14" pizza =
136%+ of 12"

$$\sqrt[3]{0.5} = 0.7937$$

$$\sqrt{2} = 1.2599$$

$$2+2=4$$

WAIT, SO... YOUR FATHER IS THE SON OF AN IMMORTAL?

DO YOU WANT TO
TALK ABOUT IT?



I... I DON'T EVEN WANT TO
THINK ABOUT IT. AFTER I'VE
HAD SOME TIME, BUT...

I... I NEED A DISTRACTION.

A BIG ONE.

I DON'T KNOW HOW NOT
TO THINK ABOUT IT.

END

HEY, GUESS WHAT?

RAVEN'S
MY DAD.

OH!
RIGHT.
SORRY.

ASHLEY, RAVEN IS A
HALF-IMMORTAL WIZARD
WHO TEACHES HISTORY
AT MOPERVILLE SOUTH.

HISTORY!

- The past!
- Written by the victors!
- Mix of Facts, Deductions, and Guesswork!

OH...

BUT RAVEN
TOLD ME HALF-
IMMORTALS
CAN'T HAVE
CHILDREN...

W-WHY WOULD
HE TELL YOU
THAT?

WHEN WE TRIED TO SAVE
THE BOAR, PART OF THE PLAN
WAS ME TALKING TO IT.

WAIT
WHAT

I LOOKED LIKE
SUSAN, SO I
ASKED IF HE
HAD ANY KIDS.

I CAN ONLY DO THAT WHEN FUZZY,
SO HE USED AN ILLUSION TO HIDE
THAT, AND MADE ME LOOK RELATED TO
HIM TO INVITE FEWER QUESTIONS.

YOU IMMEDIATELY THOUGHT
HE MIGHT BE MY DAD?

HE DIDN'T THINK
THEY COULD. NEITHER
DID PANDORA. SHE
FELT TERRIBLE ABOUT
MISINFORMING HIM.

I KNEW HE
FOUND OUT
HE HAD A
DAUGHTER,
BUT...

...I HAD NO IDEA
HE WAS TALKING
ABOUT DIANE.

I GUESS I WASN'T FAR OFF?
BUT HE SAID HALF-IMMORTALS
CAN'T HAVE KIDS, SO...



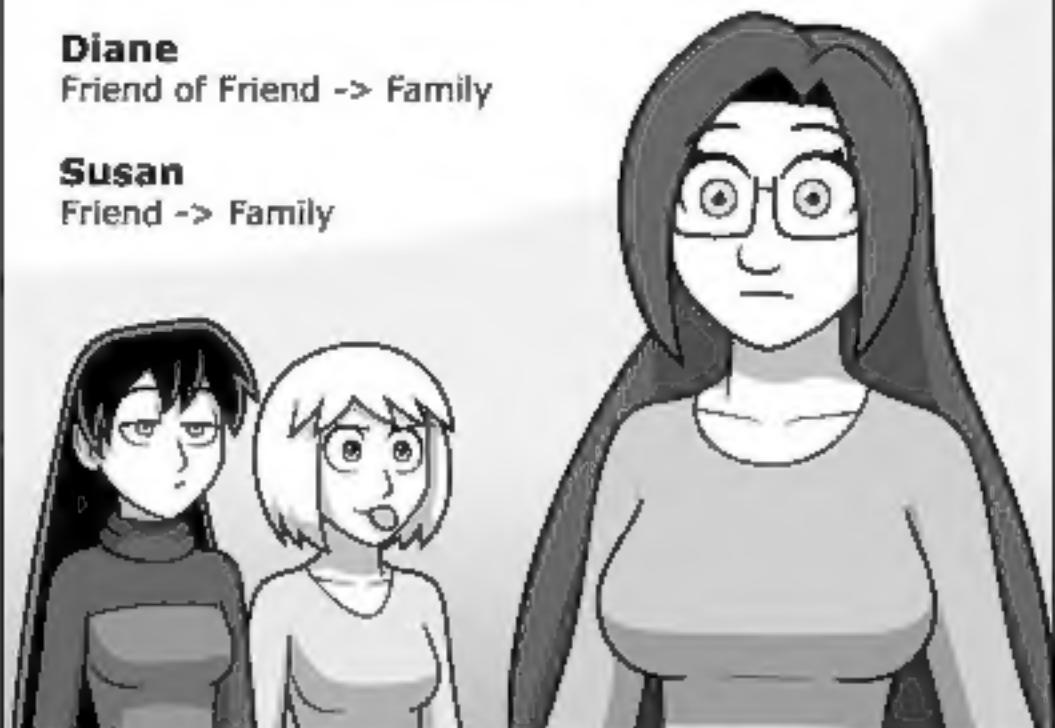
Updating Perception of Relationships

Diane

Friend of Friend -> Family

Susan

Friend -> Family



YOU KNOW HIM? YOU DON'T EVEN GO TO SOUTH!

I'M KINDA-SORTA FRIENDS WITH YOUR GRANDMOTHER? SHE WANTED MY MAGIC TO HELP WITH A THING AND SHE VOWED TO HELP ME AWAKEN. AND

RIDICULOUSLY COMPLICATED TO EXPLAIN, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE UNFAMILIAR WITH HELPFUL POP CULTURE REFERENCES TO COMPARE IT TO.

YOUR MAGIC?

WITHDRAWN FOR NOW

ANYWAY PANDORA TALKED TO ME ABOUT HER SON, WHO I LATER LEARNED WAS RAVEN. SHE WAS UPSET ABOUT MISLEADING HIM, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ABOUT.

I WANTED HIM TO KNOW HOW MUCH SHE CARED ABOUT HIM, AND SHE'D BE BACK WITH REAL MEMORIES OF HIM, SO I CALLED HIM UP

WHEN HE TOLD ME PANDORA GOT A CHANCE TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT IT, HE ALSO TOLD ME HE HAD A DAUGHTER.

WHAT'D HE... SAY ABOUT ME?

THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW HE WAS GOING TO MAKE IT UP TO YOU.

...OR IF HE SHOULD EVEN BE PART OF YOUR LIFE.

AH, I THINK I GAVE THE
WRONG IMPRESSION?



I'M PRETTY SURE RAVEN
WANTS TO BE PART OF YOUR
LIFE? I THINK HE DOESN'T KNOW
IF YOU WANT HIM IN YOUR LIFE.

OH.

WELL, I
MEAN...



I WASN'T REALLY INTERESTED
IN MY BIOLOGICAL FAMILY
BEFORE THE WHOLE MYSTERY
OF SUSAN THING...



AND COME ON, SHE HAS
MY FACE OF COURSE SHE'S
WELCOME IN MY LIFE

WAIT
WHAT



BUT I GUESS
NOW THAT I KNOW
WHO HE IS...

AND I GUESS IF HE
WANTS TO KNOW ME I
GUESS I SHOULD GIVE
HIM A CHANCE. BUT...

BUT?



BUT MAYBE I'VE
BEEN MAKING
EXCUSES NOT TO
SEE HIM BECAUSE I
FEEL CONFLICTED
ABOUT GOING TO
SEE HIM BEHIND MY
FAMILY'S BACK...

...AND EVEN IF
I HAD ANY IDEA
HOW I WAS
GOING TO
EXPLAIN HOW I
KNOW HE'S MY
FATHER.



...I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY'D
FEEL ABOUT ME FINDING HIM, AND
I DON'T WANT TO HURT THEM.



AREN'T THESE THE SAME PARENTS
YOU CAME OUT TO THE SAME DAY
YOU GOT TOGETHER WITH LUCY?

YEAH, THEY WEREN'T AS
SURPRISED AS I EXPECTED.

HOW???



IT SOUNDS
LIKE THEY'D BE
SUPPORTIVE IF
YOU TOLD THEM
ABOUT RAVEN?

OF COURSE THEY'D
BE SUPPORTIVE!

YOU CAN FEEL
UPSET ABOUT SOME
THING AND STILL BE
SUPPORTIVE!



WITH SUSAN,
I DON'T HAVE
TO LIE.

"MY VERY CLOSE FRIEND
NANASE KNEW I WAS
ADOPTED AND THAT SUSAN
LOOKED LIKE MY TWIN."

UH...

IT'S NOT WEIRD
THAT WE MET



I'D POINT OUT THE
SISTER AGREEMENT
AGAIN. BUT I NOW
SUSPECT ALL THIS
SECRET KEEPING FROM
HER SISTER IS PARTLY
WHY SHE PREFERENCES
SAYING "AUNT"



WITH RAVEN.
I DON'T WANT
TO BURDEN MY
FAMILY WITH
SECRETS
ABOUT MAGIC...

...AND I
DON'T WANT
TO HANG
OUT WITH
SECRET-BIO-
DAD BEHIND
THEIR BACK...

AND I
DON'T
WANT TO
LIE TO
THEM!



I'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT EVENTUALLY THERE'S NO PERFECT ANSWER TO THIS.



CHANCES ARE I'LL WIND UP TALKING TO RAVEN WHEN I RUN INTO HIM IN A HALLWAY OR SOMETHING ANYWAY, SO.



REALLY? YOU'VE

BEEN PRETTY DISTANT



MONSTERS ATTACKED. I HAD TO KILL ANOTHER VAMPIRE. I SAW PANDORA VANISH.

IT WAS BAD. I'M DEALING WITH IT



YOU FEEL BAD ABOUT KILLING THE VAMPIRE.

I SHOULDN'T THEY WERE GOING AFTER A KID.

IT'S NATURAL TO FEEL BAD. YOU'RE NOT A KILLER.

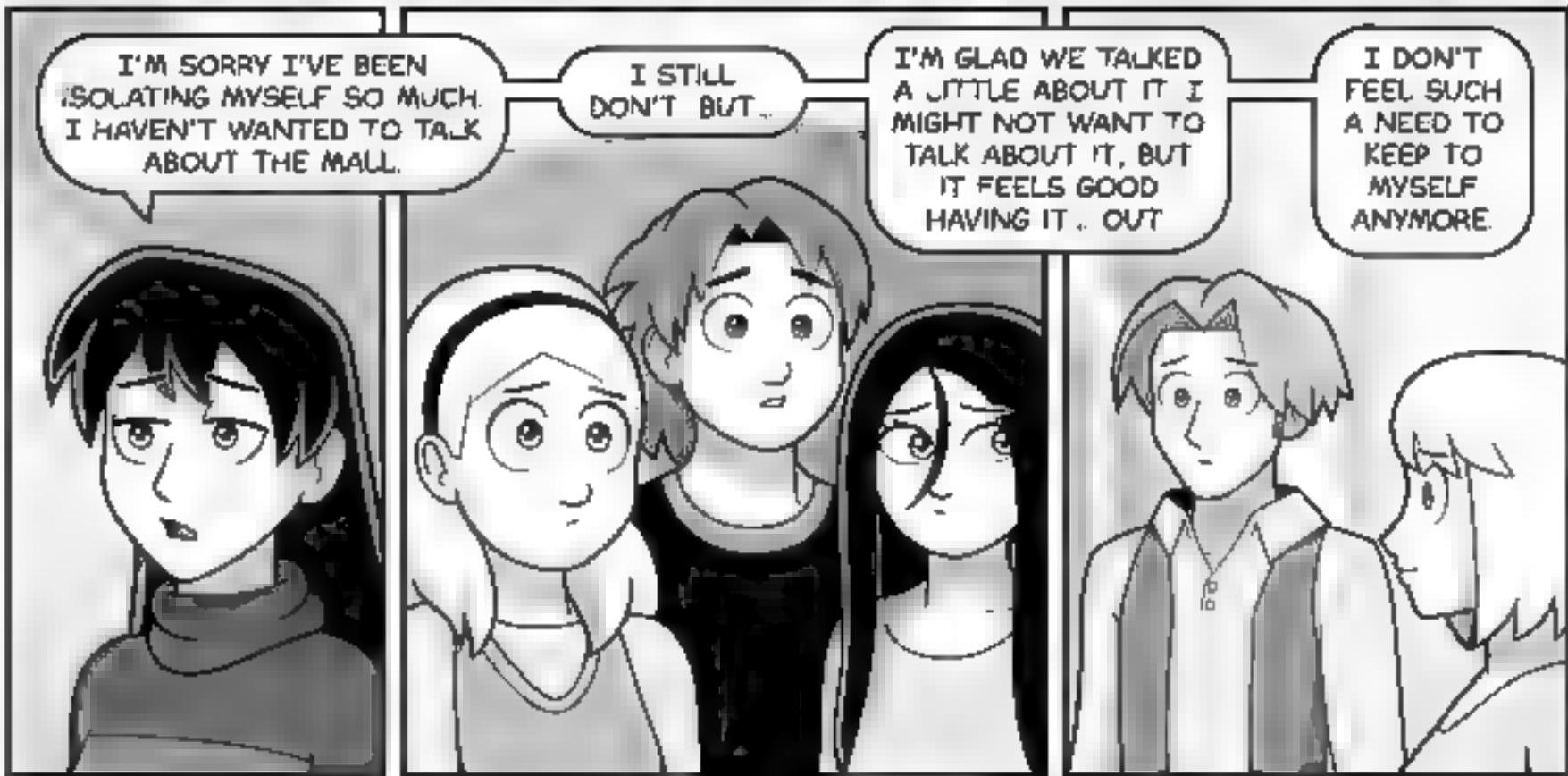


SO PRETTY MESSED UP ABOUT MY MOM, RIGHT?

WHOOSH

I BET SHE FOUGHT A FIRE BEAR.





NANASE DON'T... DON'T
APOLOGIZE FOR THAT

THE PLAN WAS YOU GIVE
ME WEAPONS, I KILL THE
VAMPIRE! I WAS READY TO
DO IT! I TRIED TO DO IT!

NEITHER OF US
SHOULD'VE BEEN IN
THAT SITUATION.

BUT I KNOCKED
IT RIGHT TOWARDS
YOU AND... AND

IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS
EVER COMING OUT OF
THAT AN INNOCENT
BYSTANDER.

BUT YOU WERE! IT
CAME AFTER YOU! IT
MIGHT'VE AGAIN!

EVEN IF IT
DIDN'T, IT'D
KILL OTHER
PEOPLE!

IT HAD
TO BE
STOPPED!

NOT BY US.

NOT BY YOU I WAS
SUPPOSED TO PROTECT
YOU KEEP IT FROM
KILLING YOU

KEEP YOU FROM
HAVING TO KILL IT!

NANASE, IF THERE'S
ANYTHING ABOUT ME
BEING THE ONE TO FINISH
OFF THE VAMPIRE THAT
I'M THANKFUL FOR...

IT'S THAT
I SPARED
YOU FROM
DOING IT

SO, UM... I KNOW EVERYONE MIGHT HAVE HAD ENOUGH MAGIC FOR ONE NIGHT, BUT I HAVE A SUGGESTION FOR WHAT WE MIGHT DO NEXT?

AFTER COVERING UP THE MIRROR, OF COURSE.

WE MIGHT WANT TO BE DONE WITH MAGIC FOR NOW

IF EVERYONE WANTS TO BE, I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND, BUT...



WE HAVE A MAGIC WAND THAT CAN SHRINK PEOPLE TO HALF HEIGHT, MAKING EVERYTHING SEEM EIGHT TIMES AS BIG FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE

WE ALSO HAVE TINY FORKS AND GLASSES...

...AND CAKE.

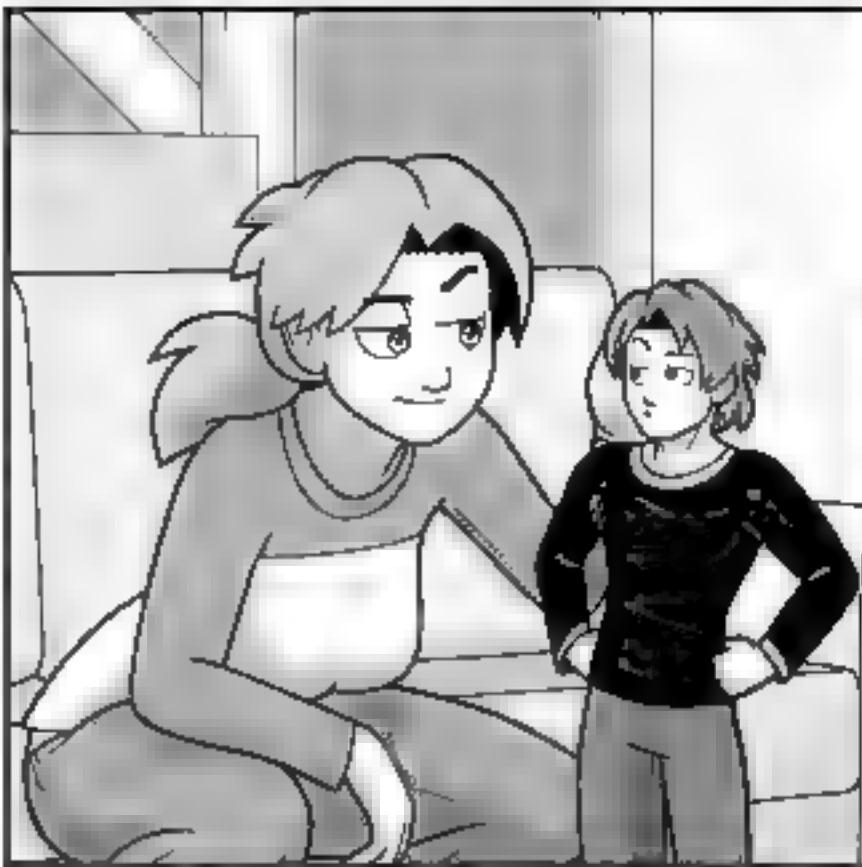


GASP

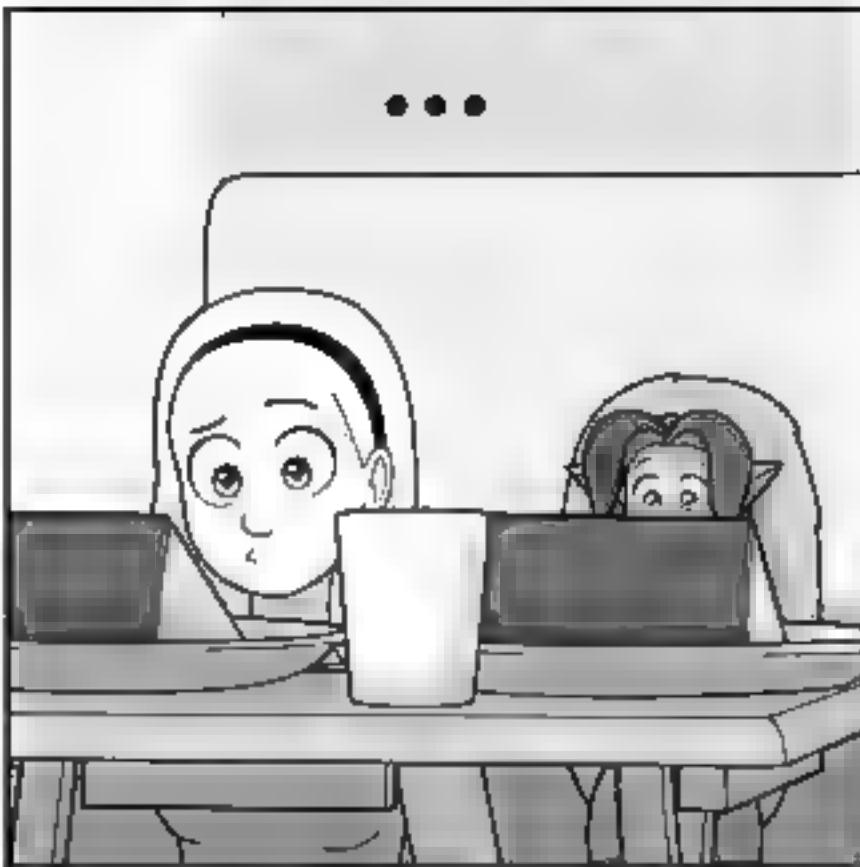
GIANT CAKE?

WHICH DO I WANT MORE, RELATIVELY GIANT CAKE, OR TO BE RELATIVELY GIANT .









At half-height or smaller, less than three feet tall with dinner trays too high, and laps too small, our heroes couldn't comfortably consume cake

Knowing that some of them (Susan) would be aghast if they simply put their plates on the floor and dug in, they decided to eat at normal size

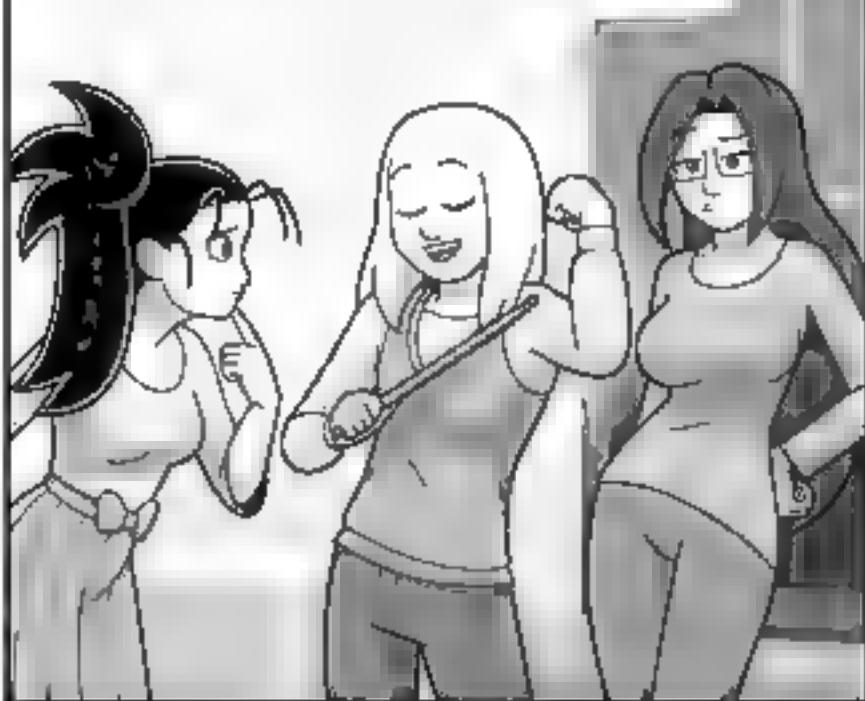
This was suggested by Nanase, who, not one hundred percent certain what happens when one of her fairy dolls eats, was suspiciously quick to suggest it

This did not stop Justin from immediately bringing up the subject of what happens when Nanase's dolls eat, and proposing quantum transference of consumed cake from fairy doll Nanase to actual Nanase

Ashley made herself enormous before reverting everyone, briefly experiencing everyone else looking extra minuscule



With normally sized cakes consumed, and a desire to continue fun with magic, additional arcane artsics ensued



Shown off.



And at least one a most forgotten spell that, hey, Elliot can do pain-free now



Sunday, The next day...





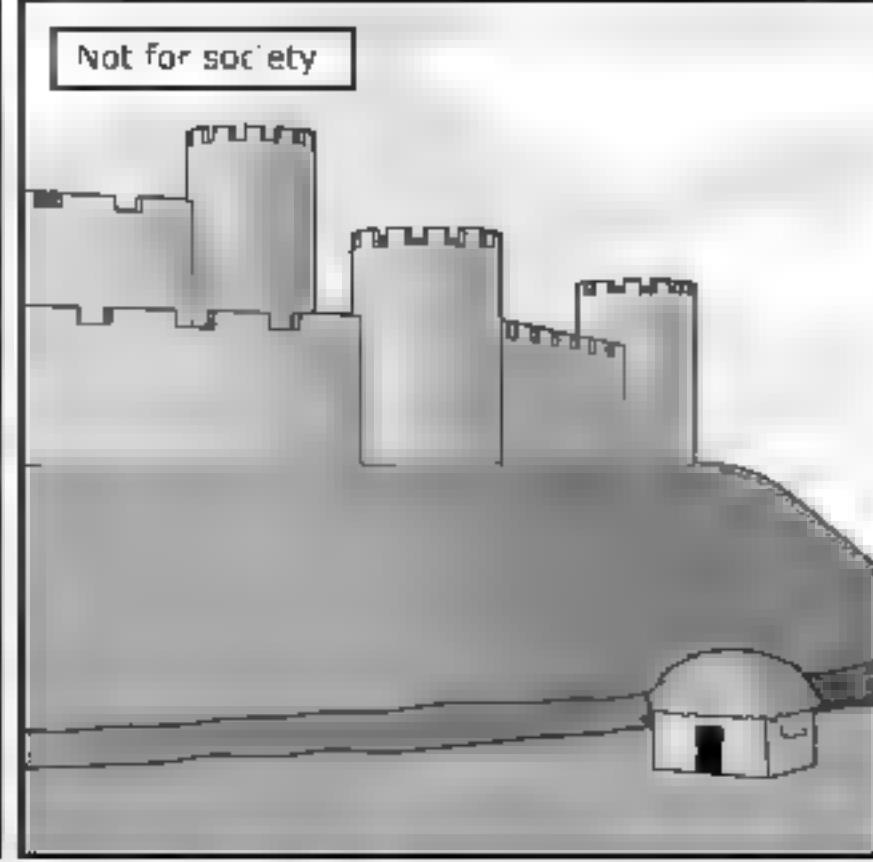
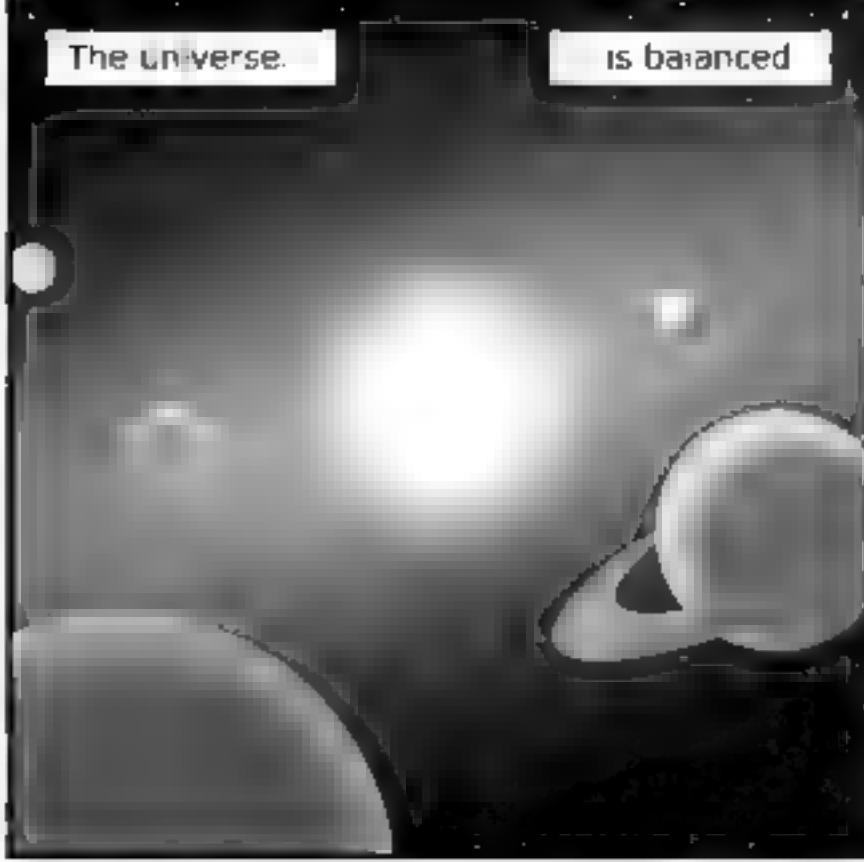
Reflections **THE END**

Story comics will return Weds, March 31
(EGSNP comics still Tues-Thurs-Saturday)

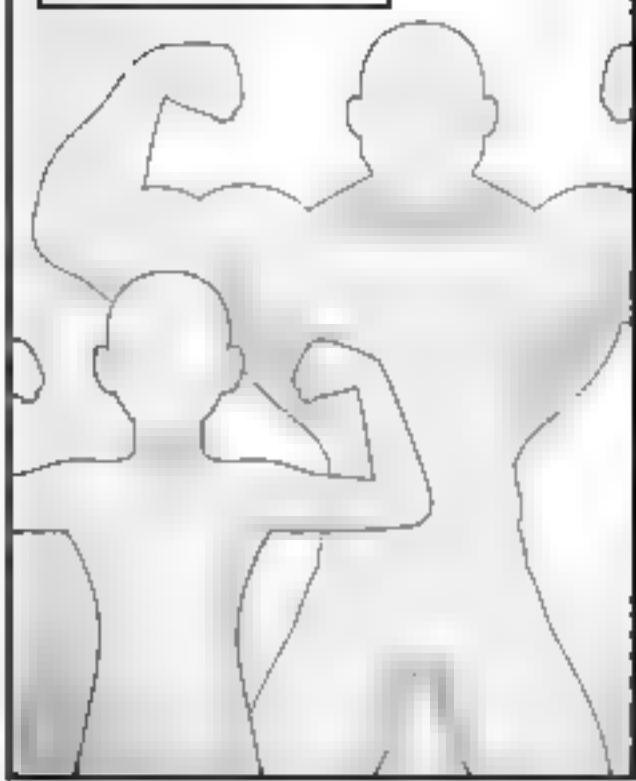
The Universe.

is balanced

Not for society



Nor for individuals



Nor the average diet.

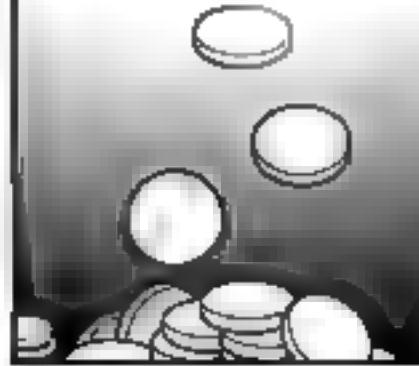


Energy Matter Magic

For one thing to increase, another must decrease

Nothing destroyed, only changed.

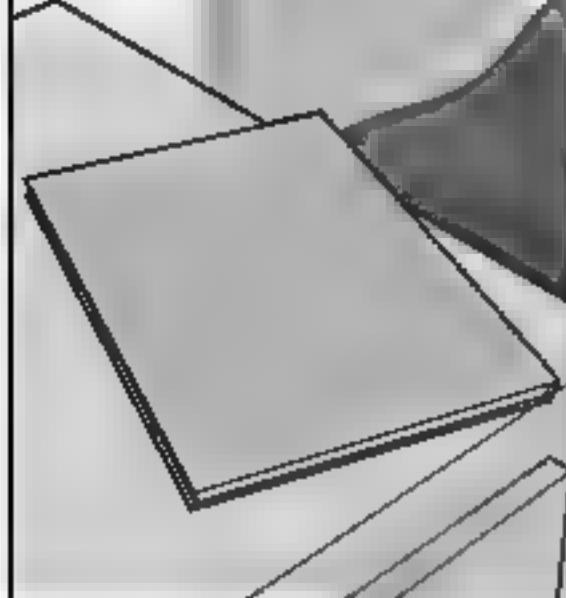
For all things, a cost.



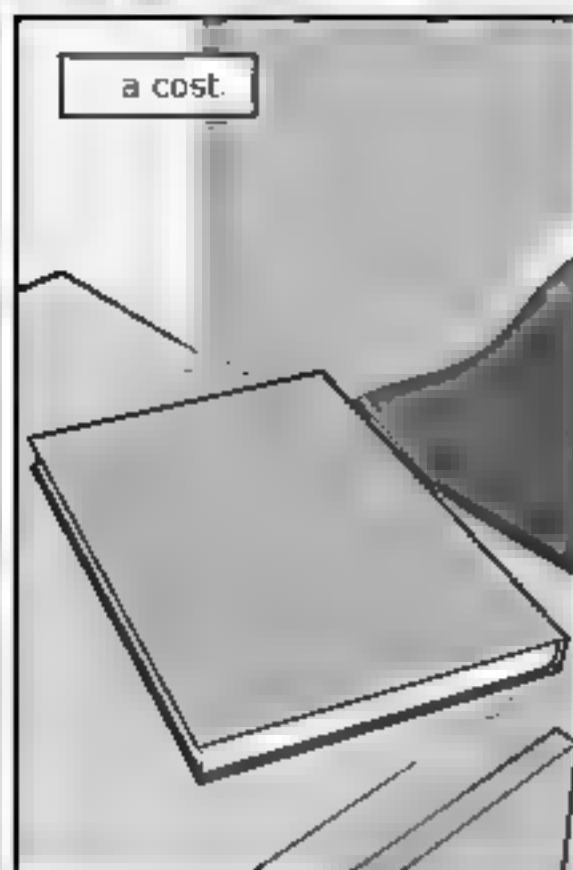
The shift of magic use from restricted to open, from certain inequity to potential future equity, was celebrated by some of the few who knew of it happening



But for all things.



a cost.



Balance. Part 1

Four weeks after Eliot's first date with Ashley, and one week after throwing a party for Ashley, Eliot, Dunkel, Edward Verres, and one other wait in a forest for a meeting with Tara and Andrea, griffins from another Earth.

Or the same Earth, were one to ask Andrea. It's a rather complicated and confusing.

One week ago, Eliot would have simply been a bit nervous about not having more to tell the griffins.

After the sudden complications of the past week, however, there is much more for everyone to be nervous about..



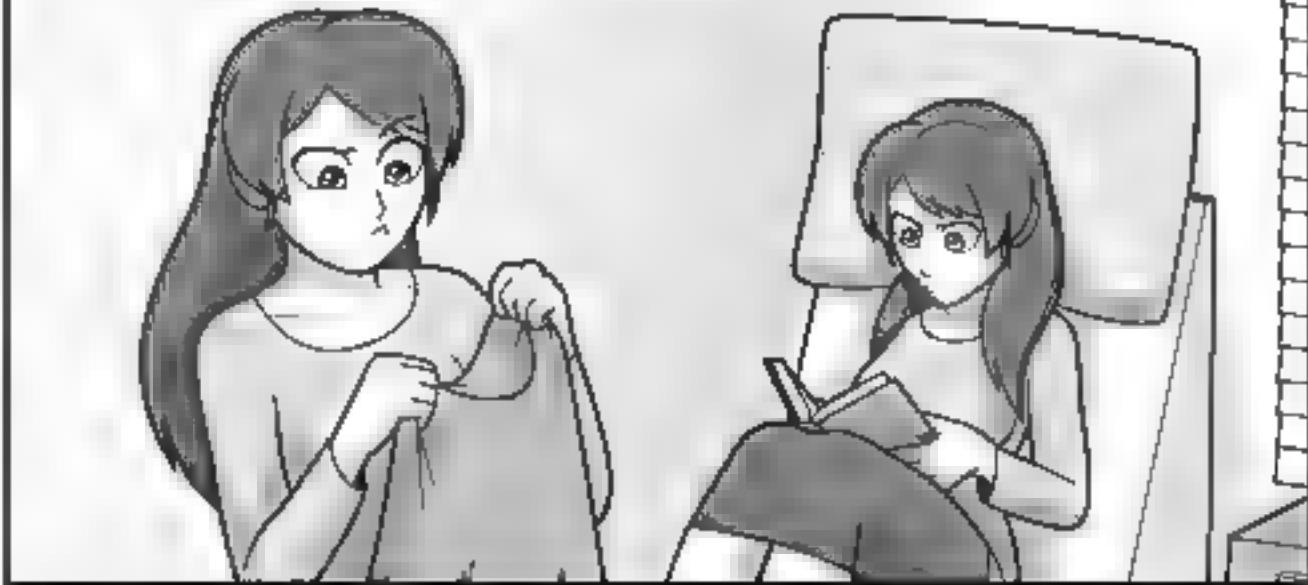
TAKEN AT ITS
MOST TECHNICAL,
HOW MAGIC WORKS
HAS NOT CHANGED
AT ALL.

WHAT HAS
CHANGED IS HOW
MUCH MAGIC IS
BEING KEPT IN
CHECK.

WITH MAGIC IN
LIMITED USE AND
HIDDEN, IT WAS
POSSIBLE TO
ENHANCE THE
VARIOUS MAGIC
RESISTANCES
OF HUMANS...

Few things are as confusing as the inner machinations of magic, for they are alien in thought, and often in open defiance of known physics

Five nights before Elliot's meeting with the griffins Tara and Andrea, however, a book of average reading comprehension seemed to be proving itself a contender in confusion for Nanase Katsure



AM I SUPPOSED
TO KNOW WHO
THIS GUY IS?

IT KEEPS SAYING
HE'S DOING, UH...
STUFF BUT...



FOX,
WHAT'RE
YOU
DOING?

THAT'S NOT
HOW YOU
FOLD STUFF
YOU, UH...



I'LL DO
IT MYSELF
DISMISSED.

peep

ANND I SHOULD HAVE
ENDED THE DUPLICATE SPELL
AFTER HAVING HER SET
DOWN THE SHIRT

THE PRIVATE
INVESTIGATOR!
THAT'S WHO THAT
WAS! HE WAS
LISTENING IN ON
THEM TALKING,
AND

...AND WHY I AM
I THINKING TEN
BILLION TIMES
MORE CLEARLY
WITH FOX GONE?



I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENING.

BEST I CAN FIGURE, THINGS WEREN'T DONE "NOT CHANGING" YET

THIS IS A DEFINITE "YES-CHANGE" TEDD

TO YOU OR ME, YEAH, BUT THE WILL OF MAGIC DOESN'T THINK LIKE WE DO!

ITS PERCEPTION OF REALITY IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT TO OURS. IT'S WHY IT BOthered CONSULTING SEERS IN THE FIRST PLACE

AND IF THIS WAS A "YES-CHANGE", YOU'D HAVE TOTALLY DIFFERENT SPELLS.

I GUESS THESE ARE ALL THE SAME SPELLS.

SO SOMETHING SOMEWHERE GOT TWEAKED SOMEHOW, AND NOW WE'VE GOT NEW SIDE EFFECTS?

BEST I CAN FIGURE, YEAH. I'D BETTER TELL MY DAD.

YEAH. WOW. I. UH.

I WONDER HOW MUCH THIS WILL AFFECT UM YOU KNOW "AGENTS"

HOPEFULLY NOT TOO MUCH.

FBI! STOP!

STOP NOW!

The shock was immediate and widespread.

Or it would have been, if anyone checked their spell books on a daily basis.

As it was, the complete lack of calm at the center of the storm was Nanase, and the storm would cyclone outward from her

WHAT THE F—



I DUNNO IF WHAT ANY OF MY SPELLS DO HAVE CHANGED. BUT MY BOOK'S DEFINITELY WORDIER. SAME WITH ELLIOT'S.

MY CHEERLEADERA SPELL READS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A ROLE-PLAYING GAME!



THE ADDITIONAL TEXT SEEMS TO BE DEVOTED TO LIMITATIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS I DID NOT PREVIOUSLY EXPERIENCE.

DOES YOUR BOOK ALSO INCLUDE WAYS AROUND THOSE SIDE EFFECTS BY USING MORE POWER OR ACCEPTING DIFFERENT SIDE EFFECTS?



AND I CAN STILL SUMMON FOX BUT IT'S HARDER TO THINK, AND WE'RE BOTH WEAKER. AND THERE'S A BUNCH OF WAYS I CAN TWEAK IT BUT

TEDD I THOUGHT MAGIC WASN'T CHANGING?!



TEDD?

YOU THERE?

WHAT THE F—



YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD!

ON WHAT CHARGES?! AND...

IS THAT A WAND?!

A MAGIC WAND, YES, AND YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR FLEEING FROM AN OFFICER OF THE LAW, TRESPASSING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY VANDALISM.



YOU TURNED SOMEONE'S CHICKENS INTO LITTLE DINOSAURS.

WE CAN FIGURE OUT EXACTLY WHAT THAT IS LATER.

NOW GET THOSE HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD.

YEAH BECAUSE THAT SOUNDS LEGIT

IT WAS JUST A PRANK, BRO! I AIN'T BROKEN FEDERAL LAW!

ARE YOU EVEN FBI? WHAT'RE YOU DOING OUT HERE? YOU AIN'T A STATE COP!



I ASSURE YOU, I AM FBI! I'LL SHOW YOU MY BADGE JUST AS SOON AS I'M LESS CONCERNED ABOUT HAVING TO QUICKLY BLOCK A SURPRISE SPELL.

MAN, I AIN'T GOING ANYWHERE WITH YOU!





GIVEN KNIGHT'S INJURIES, THE SPELL NOT ONLY BACKFIRED, BUT WAS MUCH STRONGER AND DANGEROUS THAN NORMAL

HIS PARTNER HAD STAYED BEHIND TO DISENCHANT THE CHICKENS BEFORE THEY COULD BE SEEN, BUT MANAGED TO FIND HIM SHORTLY AFTER.

WHILE HE SHOULD MAKE A FULL RECOVERY, HE...

HE MIGHT NOT HAVE SURVIVED IF HIS PARTNER HADN'T BEEN THERE

KNIGHT HAS SAID THAT GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE'S THANKFUL HE TOOK THE HIT INSTEAD OF THE PERPETRATOR.

AND THAT HE IS SORRY

THEY SHOULD HAVE STAYED TOGETHER

ONE COULD HAVE BEEN ON GUARD WHILE THE OTHER PROVIDED IDENTIFICATION.

HAS EVERYONE BEEN WARNED NOT TO USE THEIR WANDS?

IT'S... STILL IN PROGRESS...

MR. ARTHUR, WE

WE CAN'T TRUST OUR WANDS, WE ALL NEED TO DOUBLE-CHECK AND TEST ALL OUR SPELLS...

THIS IS NOT HOW WE SHOULD HAVE LEARNED THE PRICE OF MY HUBRIS.

THE PLAN YOU MADE FOR MAGIC CHANGING. CAN WE APPLY IT HERE?

MY PLAN ASSUMED A CLEAN SLATE.

I FORESAW US HAVING THE TIME AND RESOURCES TO ADAPT, AND ANY POTENTIAL TROUBLEMAKERS FLOUNDERING IN IMPOTENT IGNORANCE

THIS IS NOT A CLEAN SLATE, SYBIL.

THIS IS THE RUBBLE AND RUIN OF AN EARTHQUAKE

The day after Nanase's discovery, which was three days after the party for Ash ey, and four days before the meeting with the griffins, was a Tuesday

Completely unaware of the chicken incident w th Agent Knight, Eliot, Tedd, and Grace attempted to make sense of Eliot's newly-comp ex Cheerleadra spell

I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD BE RELIEVED OR ANNOYED THAT THESE SPELL DESCRIPTIONS ARE STILL OVER-SIMPLIFIED.

How d fferent it actually was, however, was not entirely clear

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TOLD MAGIC ITSELF THAT THE WORDY OLD STYLE CONFUSED PEOPLE.

YES, WELL. THE NEXT TIME I'M TALKING TO AN ALIEN INTELLIGENCE OF NEAR OMNIPOTENCE, I'LL CHOOSE MY WORDS MORE CAREFULLY

RIGHT I'M GOING WITH "ANNOYED" BECAUSE THIS IS TOO LACKING IN SPECIFICS FOR ME TO BE SURE IF THIS IS A DOWNGRADE OR AN UPGRADE.

IT'S NOT CLEAR IF CHEER-LEADRA IS MORE OR LESS POWERFUL NOW

I KNOW, RIGHT?

I DON'T! WHAT'S IT SAY? HOW DO YOU THINK IT WORKS NOW? WHAT'S CONFUSING ABOUT IT? I NEED EXPOSITION!

WELL-

EX-PO-SI-TION!
EX-PO-SI-TION!

THUMP THUMP THUMP

GRACE.

THE CHEERLEADRA SPELL USED TO HAVE SET ABILITIES THAT ELLIOT WOULD JUST HAVE WHEN HE TRANSFORMED.

HE COULD FLY WEAR SKIMPY CLOTHES IN COLD WEATHER, COPY THE POWERS OF HIS CELL PHONE, ETCETERA.

NOW THOSE ABILITIES ARE SPLIT UP LIKE STATS IN A ROLE-PLAYING GAME...

...AND ELLIOT CAN DISTRIBUTE "POINTS" AMONG THESE SEVEN STATS, CREATING DIFFERENT BUILDS FOR CHEERLEADRA.

YES, OF COURSE,
THE THREE MOST
IMPORTANT ONES.

ELLIOT MUST PUT AT LEAST ONE POINT IN EACH STAT, AND DEFAULTS TO AN EVENLY DIVIDED DISTRIBUTION OF POINTS IF HE DOESN'T MAKE ANY CHOICES.

THESE STATS ARE...

Charm

Enhanced social skills, and more bonuses / options w th more points

Only one point = Does nothing.

Awareness

Elevated spatial awareness and other abilities with more points.

Only one point = Does nothing.

Tech

Gain abilities from held items, or keep access to spells if nothing was held *

Only one point = Does nothing

Strength

What it sounds like

Only one point = Roughly as strong as not-transformed masculine Elliot.

Flight

More points give proper flight, faster flight, higher flight, etc

Only one point = Can float, but not fly.

Endurance

Stamina, protection from physical harm

Only one point = Decent protection from heat and cold

Resistance

Defense against spells and enchantments

Only one point = Does nothing

* Elliot can choose to gain special skills from "Tech", or keep access to non-Cheerleadra spells while Cheerleadra.

So no Cheerleadra-Cat + Phone powers.

I'M NOT SURE IF I GOT ANY "CHARM" AND "AWARENESS" STUFF BEFORE, BUT THE REST I JUST HAD, YEAH

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE YOUR BUILD HOWEVER YOU WANT! THAT'S A GREAT UPGRADE!

IT MIGHT BE, BUT THAT DEPENDS ON HOW MANY "POINTS" HE HAD BEFORE AND WHETHER IT WAS MORE OR LESS THAN FOURTEEN.

ALSO WHETHER ANY OF THOSE SKILLS WERE ABOVE THREE, WHICH IS HIS CURRENT LIMIT FOR EACH SKILL

A black and white cartoon illustration of a woman with shoulder-length hair, wearing a dark blazer over a collared shirt. She is holding a martini glass in her right hand and gesturing with her left hand. A speech bubble originates from her mouth.

I DON'T
REALLY FEEL
"OPTIMIZED".

FOURTEEN?
THAT'S
ONLY TWO
PER STAT

AND A ONE IN
MOST STATS DOES
NOTHING?

THAT SOUNDS
LOW IS THAT
LOW?

I'M NOT SURE. IT TURNS
OUT IT'S HARD TO TELL.
JUST BY GOING WITH THE
DEFAULT AND FLOATING
AROUND THE HOUSE

STRENGTH WOULD BE EASY
TO TEST IF I HAD MORE
WEIGHTLIFTING STUFF (AND
IF I'D TESTED IT BEFORE)
BUT I MOSTLY DO
CALISTHENICS, SO...



IT DOES SOUND LIKE YOU CAN
GET MORE POINTS AND INCREASE
THE SKILL CAP ABOVE THREE

I'M ONLY BASING THAT ON
THE BOOK SAYING "CURRENTLY"
A COUPLE TIMES. BUT



HUH. SO IF CHEERLEADRA ALWAYS
HAD TWO IN EACH STAT OR THREE
IN SOME STATS WITH ONE IN CHARM
OR WHATEVER, THIS CHANGE JUST
MEANS MORE OPTIONS.

BUT IF NOT,
THEN THE FORM'S
WEAKER NOW



AND SINCE IT DESCRIBES A TWO IN
STRENGTH AS "A LITTLE STRONGER".
I'M BETTING ON WEAKER.

BUT THERE IS A
WAY I CAN GET MORE
POINTS RIGHT NOW

BUT
AT WHAT
COST?!



I ASSUME
THERE'S A
TRADE-OFF

I CAN GET
MORE POINTS
BY MAKING
MYSELF
SMALLER.

MY STRENGTH GETS STUCK AT
ONE. MAYBE LESS THAN ONE?
BECAUSE Y'KNOW, SMALLER?

BUT MAYBE NOT LESS.
BECAUSE Y'KNOW MAGIC?

+2

ANYWAY, IF I SACRIFICE STRENGTH,
I GET POINTS FOR EVERYTHING ELSE.



SO... IF YOU SHRINK A LITTLE BIT, YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING BUT STRENGTH BETTER?

A LITTLE BIT FOR EACH POINT I GUESS IT COULD BE A LOT IF I WANTED A LOT OF POINTS?

I HAVE A HYPOTHESIS. NOT ABOUT WHY THIS IS SUDDENLY HAPPENING NOW, BUT ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING.

I ASSUME IT'S A LITTLE BIT, AND NOT A FAIRY-LEADRA SITUATION.

LIKE... TWENTY-ONE MINUS TWO THEN FOURTEEN TIMES FIVE... UP TO TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT SMALLER? I THINK?

SIMPLE SPELLS, LIKE YOUR BASIC FEMME-FORM SPELLS, HAVE MORE NOTES, BUT DON'T SEEM TO FUNCTION ANY DIFFERENTLY

I THINK THIS ONLY MATTERS FOR CERTAIN SPELLS BECAUSE I DON'T THINK THE SPELLS THEMSELVES HAVE ACTUALLY CHANGED.

I THINK SOME THINGS HAVE GONE FROM AUTOMATIC TO MANUAL

AT WORST, THEY'RE EXACTLY THE SAME

AT BEST, THEY HAVE MORE OPTIONS.

SORT OF LIKE... OUR SPELLS HAD TRAINING WHEELS YANKED OFF?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YEAH.

YOU CAN DO MORE BUT IT'S HARDER, AND YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO FALL OVER.

THERE'S GREATER RISK AND DIFFICULTY BUT ALSO GREATER REWARD.

ANOTHER ANALOGY WOULD BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUILDING A COMPUTER AND BUYING A PREBUILT MODEL.

IF YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, YOU CAN DO MUCH MORE IF YOU BUILD THE COMPUTER YOURSELF IF YOU DON'T...

I LIKE THE BIKE ANALOGY MORE. I KNOW HOW TO RIDE THOSE

WHATEVER'S GOING ON, I NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT CHEERLEADRA "BUILD" I'M GOING TO USE ON SATURDAY

MAYBE I SHOULD MAX OUT CHARM? I'M NOT SURE IT'S SET UP TO IMPRESS GRIFFINS FROM ANOTHER WORLD, BUT

OH CARP THE GRIFFINS. UM...

THEY'RE FRIENDLY, RIGHT? LOVELY MARRIED COUPLE? LEFT ON GOOD TERMS?

YEAH, BUT PLAN FOR THE BEST, BE READY FOR THE WORST, AND, WELL...

THE WORST WOULD BE ANGRY GRIFFINS WHO COULD DEFINITELY KICK CHEERLEADRA'S BUTT EVEN BEFORE NOW

OH.

ON TOP OF THAT, I'VE NO IDEA WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL THEM.

EDWARD!

EDWARD?

TEDD'S DAD! TALK TO HIM ABOUT IT!

ABOUT HOW TO OPTIMIZE CHEERLEADRA, OR WHAT TO TELL THE GRIFFINS?

YES.

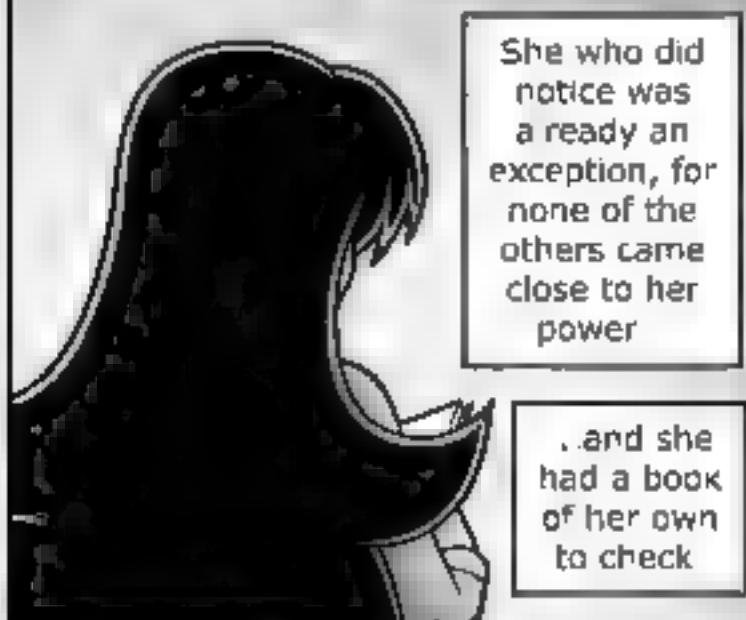
AND REQUEST A SMALL ARMY OF MAGIC FBI GOONS FOR PROTECTION

Experimentat on had to wait, for it was, after all, a Tuesday, and Tuesday makes fools of us all

Fools or not, however, by Tuesday's end, nearly every magic user was aware of some spells behaving differently

This did not include those marked by Pandora

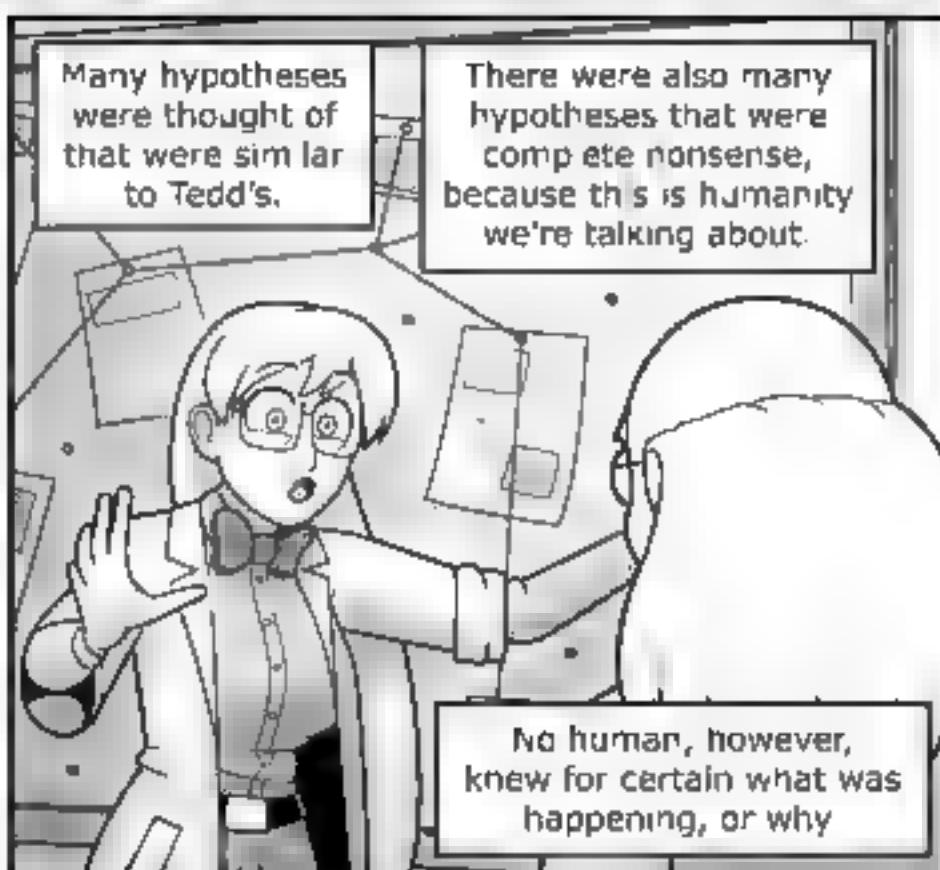
With one exception, they would not notice any difference in their spells



Most people who used magic, however, knew other people who used magic. Nearly everyone who used magic had learned how from another person

An immortal rampantly giving isolated individuals magic marks without their knowledge was, to put it mildly, an anomaly.

Though how to use magic wasn't common knowledge, there was strong word of mouth among magic users.



No human, that was, except for a man who didn't know that he knew, or that there was such a thing to know about,

A man with no memory of the bargain he'd struck, or of his hidden service to the world, except when he needed those memories

And at the very start of Wednesday, he would share that truth with another.



**WE'VE HAD IT WITH YOUR
FABIAN TACTICS, FABIUS!**

I CAN'T HELP IT!
I'M TOO FABIUS NOT
TO USE THEM!

AND BESIDES,
THEY'RE
WORKING!

SOUND LONG
TERM STRATEGY
DOESN'T MAKE
US LOOK COOL!

WE'RE
PROMOTING
MINUCIUS TO
CO-DICTATOR!

EHH?!

'SUP, NERD! I'M GONNA
WRECK HANNIBAL!

OH DEAR GODS.

CAN I PLEASE
KEEP DOING MY
STRATEGY?

WITH ENOUGH
BAKE SALES
WE'LL DEFINITELY
CONVINCE HANNIBAL
THAT CARTHAGE
SHOULD BE A
FR END OF ROME!

YOU'RE
DREAMING
ABOUT
ENDING THE
SECOND
PUNIC WAR
WITH BAKE
SALES?

OH FOR...

YOU DID NOT
JUST INTERRUPT
A FUN HISTORICAL
FICTION DREAM!

SORRY?

The Emissary of Magic acts on behalf of The W.I. Of Magic itself

He previously contacted Grace in her dreams to warn her of magic potentially changing. Grace would forget most of these dreams, so this took several attempts.

He only knows who Grace is while using a spell to contact her in her dreams, making other means of contact all but impossible.



I AM HERE BECAUSE MAGIC DOESN'T PERCEIVE REALITY AS WE DO. EVERYTHING IT TELLS US IS A TRANSLATION OF SOMETHING ENTIRELY ALIEN TO US, AND WE ARE ENTIRELY ALIEN TO IT.



COMMUNICATING WITH MAGIC IS LIKE TWO BEINGS THAT CAN BARELY COMPREHEND EACH OTHER TRYING TO COMMUNICATE THROUGH SEVERAL LAYERS OF TRANSLATION IN BOTH DIRECTIONS.

SO LIKE A JELLYFISH TALKING TO AN EAGLE?



SORT OF, YES. THE WILL OF MAGIC TOUCHED ON WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT A LOT OF DETAILS WERE LEFT OUT.

SHORTLY AFTER A RELEVANT PART OF THE MAGIC SYSTEM FINISHED ADAPTING TO THE NEW NORMAL...

...MAGIC PICKED UP ON CONFUSION FROM THE SEERS.

AFTER GOING OVER EVERYTHING WITH ME, THE PROBLEM BECAME OBVIOUS.

...AND TO KEEP CERTAIN FORMS OF MAGIC FROM BEING POSSIBLE.

IF MAGIC ENTERS COMMON USAGE, THIS INTERFERENCE BECOMES INFEASIBLE.

THAT'S WHAT MAGIC SOUNDS LIKE?



TO ME, YES.

WHEN MAGIC IS TRANSLATED, EVERYTHING IS SIMPLIFIER.

IN THIS CASE, "ENHANCE" AND "INTERFERENCE" WERE DETAILS SIMPLIFIED TO THE POINT THAT THEIR TRUE MEANING WAS LOST.



MAGIC RESISTANCE, AND PREVENTING SOME TYPES OF MAGIC, WERE EFFECTS OF THESE "ENHANCEMENTS"...

...BUT THEY DID MORE THAN THAT



CORRECT.

MAGIC
WANTS,
PERHAPS
NEEDS,
TO BE
USER

IT ENCOURAGES
PEOPLE TO USE
MAGIC BY TAILORING
SPELLS TO THEIR
PERSONALITIES.

BUT BEFORE NOW, IT
ALSO ASSISTED WITH
USING COMPLICATED,
COSTLY, AND RISKY
SPELLS.

WHEN MAGIC
MADE CHANGES,
THIS HELPING
HAND HAD TO
LET GO.

SOMETHING IT MANAGES VERY WELL
IN SPITE OF ITS NATURE, EVEN IF IT
DOES SOMETIMES UPSET PEOPLE.

THIS ALLOWED FOR
EXTREMELY ENTICING
SPELLS THAT WERE
EASY TO USE.

WHICH BRINGS UP
ANOTHER FAILURE
IN COMMUNICATION.

FROM MAGIC'S
PERSPECTIVE,
THE CHANGES
TO ITS SYSTEM
WERE DONE
RIGHT AWAY.

THIS LETTING
GO, HOWEVER,
WOULD TAKE
TIME, AND
EFFECTIVELY
FUNCTION AS
A SECOND
CHANGE.

BOTH THE TIME AND SCOPE OF THIS
WERE NOT PROPERLY ADDRESSED.
I BELIEVE MAGIC SOMEHOW PERCEIVED
IT AS IMPLIED BY OTHER INFORMATION.

BUT HOW WAS
THIS NOT PART OF
THE CHANGE?

AND WHY GRADUALLY?
WHY NOT INSTANTLY LIKE
EVERYTHING ELSE?

MOSTLY, IT
WAS A PASSIVE
SIDE EFFECT
OF THE CHANGE,
NOT A DIRECT
ACTION.

IT WAS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
LETTING WATER EVAPORATE IN A
BOTTLE, AND POURING IT OUT.

THE CHANGE LEFT A BOTTLE WITH
NO LIR BUT DID NOT EMPTY IT.

BUT ALSO BECAUSE
INSTEAD OF A HAND
LETTING GO, IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN LIKE YANKING
EVERYONE'S ARMS OUT
OF THEIR SOCKETS.

Anny
second
now ...

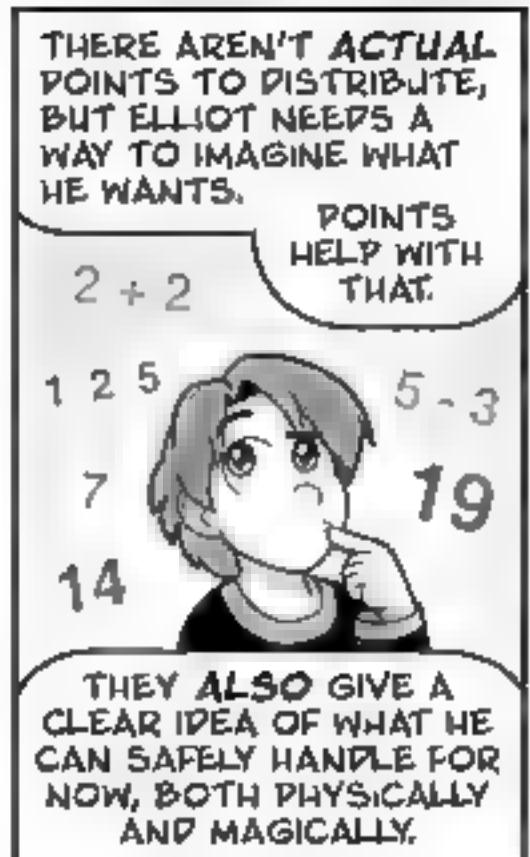
ACTION!
DONE!



GAH INDEED.

Next story comic planned for Friday!

I am getting my second vaccination shot, and my understanding is I should expect at least a day of not feeling well, though it could be more. If the schedule changes further, I will do my best to let everyone know, and I'll tweet about how I'm doing - @elgoonishhive



YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT ELLIOT'S SPELL

I CAN KNOW ABOUT ANY SPELL SO LONG AS IT IS RELEVANT TO A TASK I'VE BEEN GIVEN.

AS FOR SHRINKING FOR MORE "POINTS", WELL...

THAT'S SOMETHING VERY FEW WOULD HAVE DISCOVERED WHILE MAGIC WAS GIVING A HELPING HAND

HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS...

LET'S SAY A SHORT FRIEND OF YOURS WANTS TO REACH A SHELF HIGHER THAN EITHER OF YOU, AND YOU HAVE SIZE MAGIC.

IS IT EASIER TO—



DOES SHE HAVE SIZE MAGIC?!

WHAT? WHO?

HER! RHODA!

I CAN'T SAY. IT'S IRRELEVANT TO MY TASK.

ARRRGH
I AM SO SURE YOU SAID SHE DID!

I CAN NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY. ANYWAY, YOUR SHORT FRIEND WANTS TO REACH A HIGH SHELF YOU HAVE SIZE MAGIC.

IS IT EASIER TO SIMPLY GROW THEM...

...OR TO SHRINK YOURSELF AND GROW THEM?

THE SECOND ONE SOUNDS LIKE I'M CASTING TWO SPELLS, AND SHOULD BE WAY HARDER WITH NO BENEFIT WHATSOEVER.

BUT SINCE YOU'RE ASKING, THE SECOND ONE IS EASIER.

CORRECT. MAGIC HAS A CURRENCY THAT DEFIES THE PHYSICAL LOGIC OF THE WORLD.

THE VALUE OF ATTRIBUTES.

THE VALUE OF ATTRIBUTES?

SO WHAT, I ENCHANT MYSELF IN SOME OPPOSITE WAY TO MAKE A SPELL USE LESS ENERGY?

OPPOSITE, APPROPRIATE, IRONIC...

HOW THINGS ARE GENUINELY PERCEIVED BY THE CASTER MATTER MORE THAN PHYSICAL SENSE.

FOR EXAMPLE, A SPELL THAT BOOSTS STRENGTH CAN BE EASIER TO CAST AT THE COST OF REASON IF THAT GENUINELY MAKES SENSE TO YOU.

THERE'S NO ARGUING THAT SOMETHING MAKES SENSE IF YOU DON'T ACTUALLY BELIEVE IT.

WITH ENOUGH ENERGY, YOU CAN JUST MAKE, UM, RHODA HERE BIG.

IF YOU'RE SHORT ON ENERGY TO MAKE HER NOT-SHORT, YOU CAN TRADE HOW BIG YOU ARE TO MAKE HER BIGGER AT A REDUCED COST.

IF MULTIPLE PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED, THE ENCHANTMENTS ARE LINKED IF ANY OF THEM END, THEY ALL DO.

IF SOMETHING IS TRACKING THE ENCHANTMENT, IT WILL FIND EVERY ASPECT OF IT.

NOT THAT ENCHANTMENT TRACKING IS COMMON. IT'S JUST A THING THAT WOULD HAPPEN.

HUH. SO... COULD I MAKE ME BIGGER AND HER SMALLER AT A REDUCED COST?

NO. THE POINT IS GIVE AND TAKE. THAT WOULD JUST BE TAKING.

YOU HAVE TO GIVE SOMETHING.

OKAY... BUT WHAT IF I HAVE A NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTE, AND--

REDUCE AN ATTRIBUTE.

PLEASE STOP TRYING TO BREAK THE ATTRIBUTE ECONOMY.

THE SPELL YOU'RE CASTING
ALREADY KNOWS IF ITS
EFFECTS ARE INCREASING
OR DECREASING VALUES.

YOUR PERCEPTION DOESN'T
AFFECT THAT. IT ONLY
AFFECTS WHAT ATTRIBUTES
ARE OPTIONS FOR TRADING.



IF A SPELL THINKS IT'S
DECREASING A VALUE, YOU
WON'T HAVE THE OPTION
TO TRADE TO BEGIN WITH.

NOW, IF YOU'RE
QUITE DONE TRYING
TO FIND EXPLOITS—

NEVER!

SIGH?



THESE TRADES CAN
DO MORE FOR CERTAIN
SPELLS THAN REDUCE
ENERGY COST.

THEY CAN PROVIDE
POWER AND EFFECTS
THAT COULD NOT
NORMALLY BE ACHIEVED
WITHOUT GREAT SKILL.

ELLIOT, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS MORE ENERGY
THAN HIS HERO SPELL REQUIRES, BUT
IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE AS PUMPING EXTRA
ENERGY INTO IT TO GET MORE POINTS.



WELL, IT SORT
OF IS, BUT IF HE
TRIED IT AT THIS
POINT, HE'D JUST
WASTE ENERGY.

MAKING HIMSELF SMALLER DOESN'T
MAKE THE SPELL EASIER TO CAST, BUT
IT DOES PROVIDE MORE POINTS THAN
HE COULD NORMALLY GET WITHOUT
MORE SKILL, POWER, AND EXPERIENCE.

A LOT OF SPELLS
OFFER ADDITIONAL
POWER AND
EFFECTS IN THIS
WAY, AND SOME
SUCH TRADES WILL
NOW BE NOTED IN
SPELL BOOKS.

THOSE NOTED
TRADES WON'T BE
THE ONLY ONES
THAT ARE POSSIBLE,
HOWEVER.

SO... THE SIZE THING DOESN'T
MAKE THE HERO SPELL EASIER
TO CAST, BUT THERE COULD BE
A WAY TO DO THAT? A TRADE
TO GET MORE POINTS IN EVERY-
THING, INCLUDING STRENGTH?



WHAT
COULD HE
TRADE TO
DO THAT?

I'M
NOT
TELLING
YOU.

WHY NOT?/ WHAT IF HE NEEDS
MORE OF THOSE POINTS THAT
DON'T EXIST FOR SOMETHING?

LIKE FIGHTING
GIANT BIRD-CATS!



ONE, THOSE POINTS
REPRESENT WHAT HE CAN
SAFELY HANDLE RIGHT NOW.

TWO, IT'S A
BAD TRADE.



STAY AWAY FROM IT.



The emissary of Magic visited me in my dreams again and explained some stuff! ☺

Magic was holding our hands, but now it's not, and there's an attribute currency I THINK I understand? I can explain after school

Also, he said uryvoms ?? aren't from space? WHAT?



YOU WILL
WAKE UP
VERY SOON.
I AM SORRY
ABOUT THAT.

I WAS
TOLD YOU'LL
REMEMBER
EVERYTHING.

DO YOU HAVE
ANY QUESTIONS?

UM... OH!

OH OH
OH!

BEFORE THE NOT-CHANGE!
I COULDN'T USE WANDS! MY
CLOTHES DIDN'T TRANSFORM
WITH ME!

NOW I CAN, AND THEY DO!

WHY IS
THAT?!

THAT'S NOT
TECHNICALLY
RELEVANT, BUT
I DO KNOW
THIS.

RESTRICTIONS
PREVIOUSLY
PLACED ON THE
USE OF MAGIC BY
JRYUOMS WERE
LIFTED BY THE
"NOT-CHANGE".

EVERYONE
OF JRYUOM
DESCENT CAN
USE MORE
MAGIC MORE
EASILY NOW.

I DON'T KNOW
WHY, BUT THAT'S
DEFINITELY NOT IT.

JRYUOMS ARE
NOT FROM
OUTER SPACE.

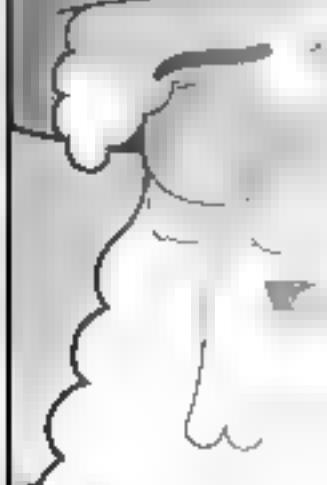
UM...
UM...

WHY WAS A
RESTRICTION
PUT ON
JRYUOMS?!

WAS IT
BECAUSE
THEY'RE
FROM
OUTER
SPACE?!

I DON'T KNOW
WHY, BUT THAT'S
DEFINITELY NOT IT.

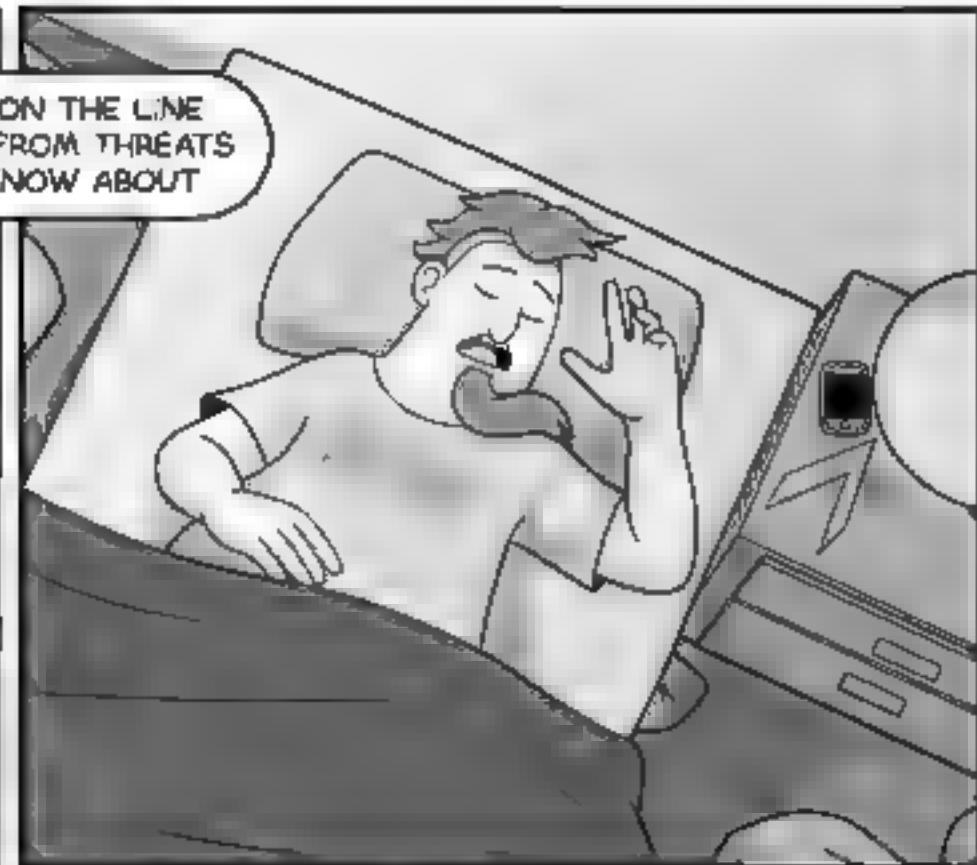
I DON'T KNOW
WHY, BUT THAT'S
DEFINITELY NOT IT.





KNIGHT

WE PUT OUR LIVES ON THE LINE
TO PROTECT PEOPLE FROM THREATS
THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT



WE HAVE TO BE WILLING
TO USE FORCE TO DEFEND
THEM, AND OURSELVES,
FROM THE MONSTERS
THAT ABUSE MAGIC



OUR JOB IS TO PROTECT
THOSE WITHOUT MAGIC.

TO KEEP
MAGIC OUT
OF THEIR
LIVES.



WE MIGHT HAVE TO HURT
PEOPLE SOMETIMES, BUT WE DO
IT FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS.

You got lucky
once

You won't get
lucky again.

Behave.

THERE IS NOTHING FOR US
TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT



WE ARE THE
GOOD GUYS.

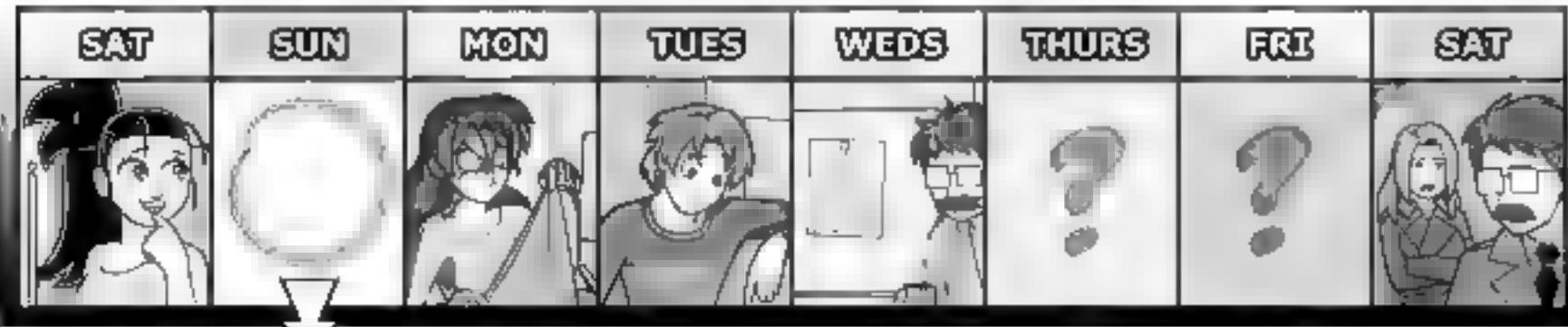


Before the note on the
fridge of Wednesday

The fools of
Tuesday.

And the sudden
change in magic
of Monday

There was the plotting and
scheming of Sunday



IT'S A SIMPLE HEIST

"HEIST"?

YOU OUR
SQUIRREL ON
THE INSIDE,
CONVINCE
RHODA THAT
SHE SHOULD
TRY PLAYING IN
ONE OF OUR
FRIDAY NIGHT
CARD TOURNAMENTS.

SARAH.
MEANWHILE,
CONVINCES
CATALINA THAT
CARD GAMES
ARE SUPER
COOL AND
TOTALLY AN
ACCEPTABLE
HOBBY FOR
ADULTS TO
HAVE

THEN, AT THE TOURNAMENT, THE
ACE UP OUR SLEEVE, MY BOYFRIEND
LUKE, ANTICIPATORIALLY LOOKS
AT THEM WITH HIS ABILITY TO SEE
IF PEOPLE HAVE MAGIC POWER.

GET THEM HERE,
AND THERE IS
ZERO CHANCE OF
IT NOT WORKING

YOU SUGGESTED
THIS BEFORE, AND I
LIKED IT THEN BUT
NOW... I DUNNO...

WHAT? WHAT'S
WRONG WITH IT?

THE PART WHERE WE TRICK
THEM INTO LEARNING HOW TO
PLAY A COMPLICATED CARD
GAME AND SPEND MONEY ON A
TOURNAMENT, SO WE CAN HAVE
SOMEONE THEY DON'T EVEN
KNOW INVADE THEIR PRIVACY?

WELL, WHEN
YOU PUT IT LIKE
THAT

As a result of convoluted magic dream nonsense, Grace was one million percent* certain both Catalina and Rhoda had magic marks that would grant them spells

* Possible hyperbole



She was also certain Justin had a magic mark, however, but he did not appear to have one.



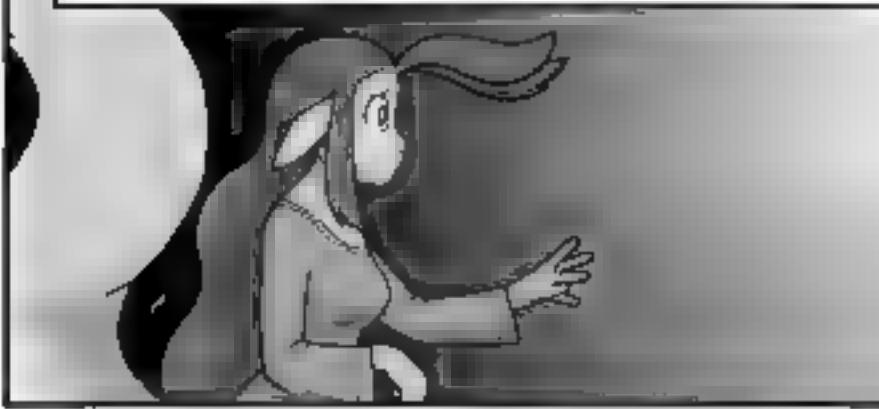
A magic mark will vanish as a result of a magic awakening, but awakening tends to mean getting more spells.

As far as they knew, Justin had not gotten any new spells.



Grace, a hybrid of squirrel, human, and maybe aliens, felt secrets were keeping her distant from Rhoda, her friend and former history tutor.

She wanted to tell Rhoda everything about herself, and felt Rhoda having magic would open that door for her.



Amid concerns about sharing everyone's secrets, and potentially getting Rhoda and Catalina entangled with secret magic police when they don't even have magic, however

...it was begrudgingly agreed that they should try to covertly find out if Rhoda and Catalina actually have magic before revealing any big secrets to them...



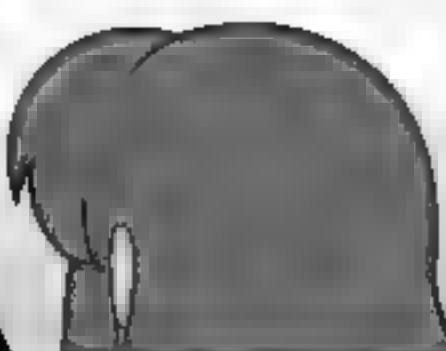
I'M ONLY SUGGESTING THE TOURNAMENT BECAUSE IT GETS THEM HERE AT A PREDICTABLE TIME WHEN IT WOULDN'T BE WEIRD FOR LUKE TO BE AROUND.

AND MAYBE EXTRA REVENUE FOR MY UNCLE'S COMIC SHOP

IF WE CAN THINK OF A BETTER OPTION FOR WHEN AND WHERE, THAT'S FINE, BUT LUKE IS THE ANSWER TO THIS PROBLEM.

I GET WHAT YOU MEAN, JUSTIN, BUT

I DIDN'T LIKE IT WHEN HE "LOOKED" AT ME WITHOUT ASKING. AND I WASN'T EVEN TRICKED INTO BEING HERE.



GRACE, WE'RE TRYING TO COVERTLY FIND OUT IF THEY HAVE MAGIC SO WE DON'T RECKLESSLY REVEAL SECRETS OR DRAG THEM INTO ANYTHING.

AND IF THEY HAVE MAGIC, THERE'S ALL SORTS OF HELPFUL STUFF WE CAN TELL THEM!

THAT TEDD CAN TELL THEM.

WE MIGHT BE INVADING THEIR PRIVACY BUT IT'S FOR GOOD REASONS.

I KNOW, AND IF I SAW THE EMISSARY OF MAGIC AGAIN, I'D JUST ASK HIM IF THOSE TWO HAVE MAGIC.

BUT IT STILL FEELS WRONG TO SET THEM UP TO BE SPIED ON.



ASKING THE EMISSARY'S OKAY, BUT A LUKE LOOK ISN'T?



THE EMISSARY ALREADY KNOWS! AND THE WHOLE REASON WE'RE DOING THIS IS BECAUSE I'M PRETTY SURE HE ALREADY TOLD ME! I'D JUST BE GETTING CONFIRMATION!

THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IN THE END RESULT IS THAT LUKE WOULD KNOW TOO.



AND WE'D HAVE SET UP MY FRIENDS TO GET SPIED ON.

SPEAKING OF SPYING, THE SHOP'S EMPTY, RIGHT?



YEAH, I THINK SO.

I'LL CHECK.



EASY THERE PUNISHER.
I'M (OW) FINE I JUST
TRIPPED AND HAD A BAD
LANDING ON CONCRETE
YESTERDAY THAT'S ALL
JUST SOME BIG BRUISES
AND SCRAPES.

OH DANG.
I'M SORRY TO
HEAR THAT

YOU SOUND
RELIEVED.

I MEAN, I'M SORRY YOU
TRIPPED. BUT GIVEN SOME
OF THE ALTERNATIVES

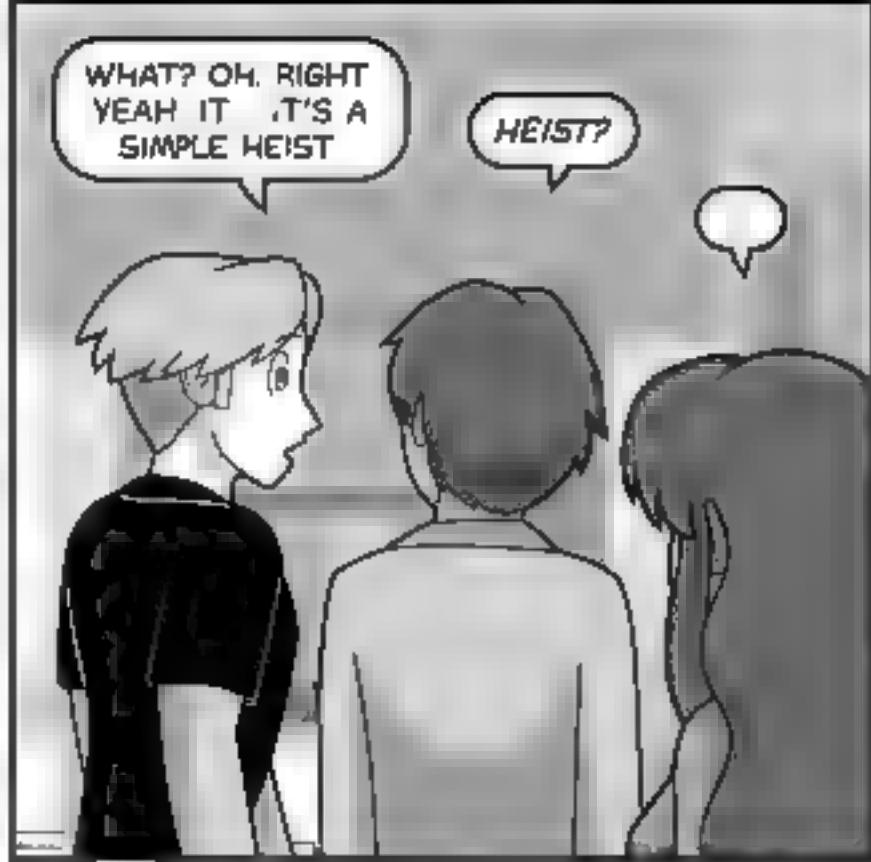


THANKS (OW).
BUT THAT'D PROBABLY
HURT MORE THAN
CAREFUL WALKING.

OH. RIGHT
SORRY

WHAT? OH. RIGHT
YEAH IT .T'S A
SIMPLE HEIST

HEIST?



One spy check later

YEAH. THE SHOP'S
EMPTY, BUT I THINK I
JUST SAW LUKE PULL
INTO THE PARKING LOT

GOOD! WE'LL HAVE TIME
TO TALK BEFORE PEOPLE
START SHOWING UP!



...

...

HE IS HERE RIGHT?

YEAH HE'S
HERE BUT

BUT?

HE'S
MOV NG
SLOW?

LIKE.
HE'S HURT
OR SOM-
THING



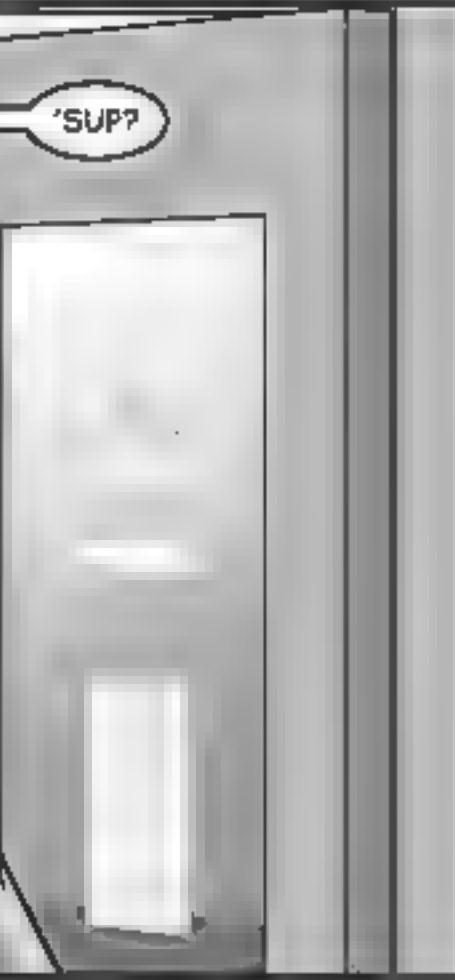
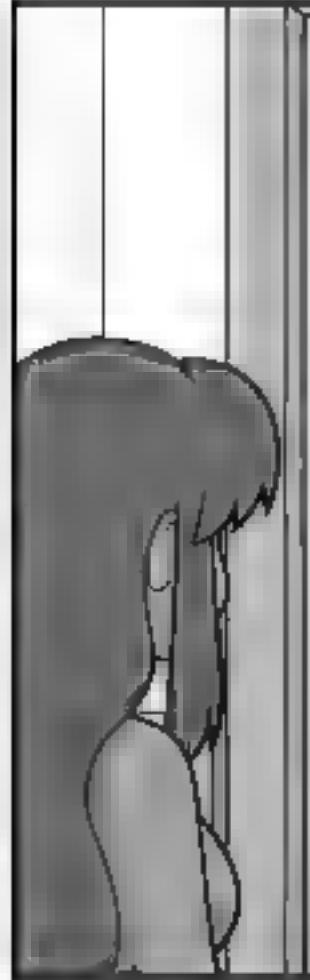
HE'S WHAT?!

DING

HEY

Ow

'SUP?



One recap of Justin's plan later, though with names withheld



OHHH...

THAT MAKES SENSE.

WHAT? NO IT DOESN'T!

WE WERE BEING STUPID!

NO YOU WEREN'T! WHAT WERE YOU SUPPOSED TO THINK WAS HAPPENING?

HONESTLY, "CHOSEN TO BE HEROES" MAKES MORE SENSE THAN WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED.



THAT'S NICE OF YOU TO SAY, BUT THERE'S HARDLY ANY CRIME AROUND HERE, MONSTERS...

...ARE A THING, WHICH IS WEIRD, BUT INFREQUENT...

...AND EVEN IF THERE WERE MORE CRIMINALS AND MONSTERS, WHAT AM I GONNA DO?

LOOK AT THEM?!

MY POWER IS LITERALLY JUST SEEING HOW SCREWED I AM!



ANYWAY, I'M SORRY, BUT ...

JUSTIN?

SUPER HEROES...



JUSTIN NO.

SORRY SORRY
INVOLUNTARY
GEEK OUT

THOUGH YOU KNOW, THERE
ARE UTILITY SUPER HEROES.
THEY DON'T ALL FIGHT

ANYWAY, WE FIGURED IT
COULDN'T BE COINCIDENCE
THAT OUR WHOLE SMALL
FRIEND GROUP GOT ABILITIES.

JUSTIN.

RIGHT SORRY

BUT THERE WEREN'T ANY MONSTERS OR
CRIME, SO WE FIGURED I WAS SUPPOSED
TO FIND OTHER PEOPLE LIKE US.

YOU WENT LOOKING
FOR VILLAINS?!

I'M NOT PROUD
OF IT, BUT YEAH

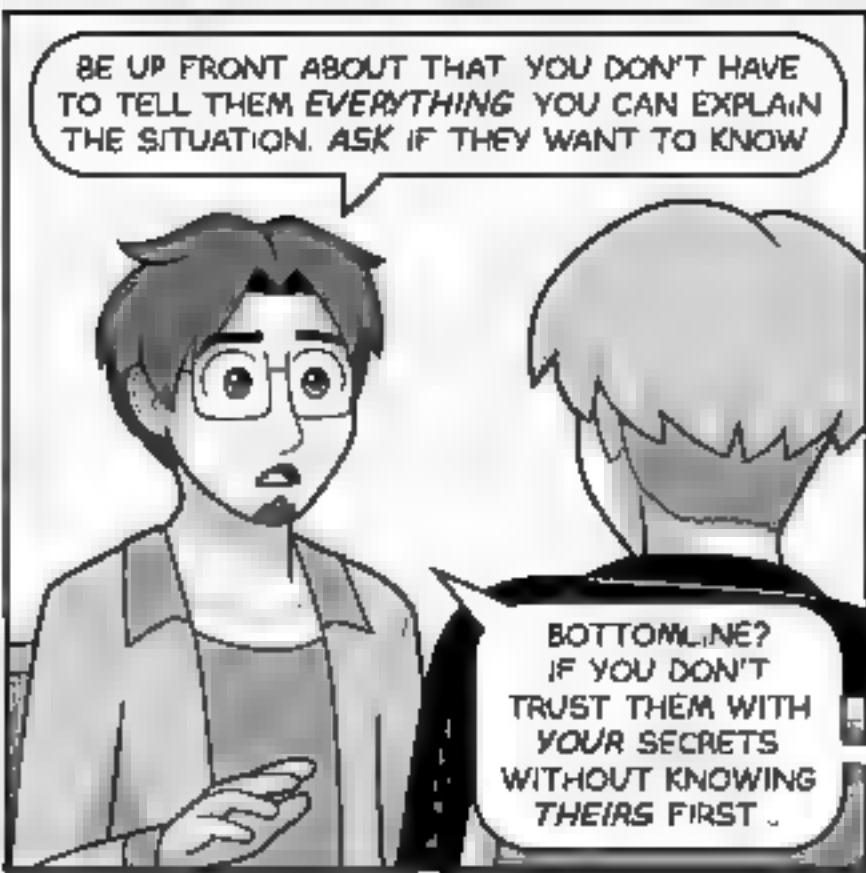
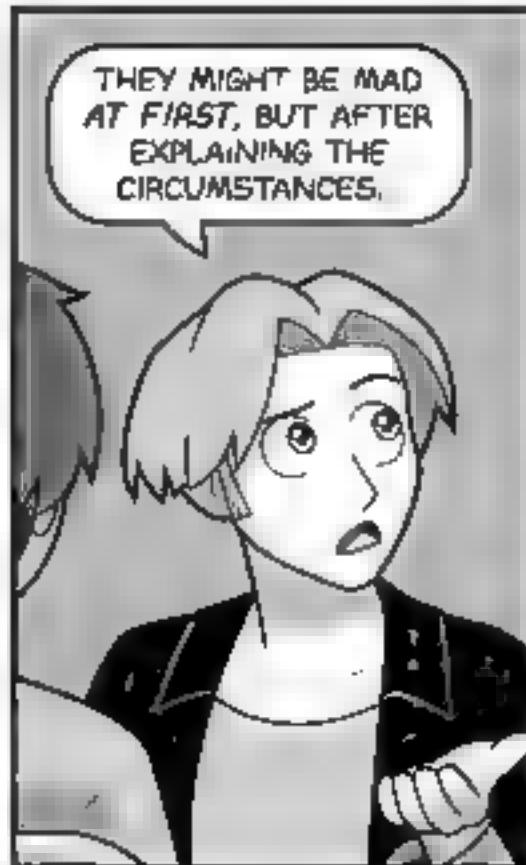
WE THOUGHT WE'D
FIND SOME VILLAINS
THAT WAY

DID YOU FIND ANY?

PEOPLE WITH
ABILITIES? YES

VILLAINS? I
DON'T KNOW?







After a period of awkward small talk, silences, and an argument about super hero physical anatomy that cannot be repeated in polite company, the Sunday card tournament began.

I MEAN, I GET LUKE'S ARGUMENT. IT'S A GOOD ARGUMENT. EVEN IF OUR SITUATION ISN'T AS SIMPLE AS TRUST...

BUT IT SOUNDED LIKE HE JUST DIDN'T WANT TO USE HIS SPELL IN GENERAL

A bit of privacy restored, Justin released some pent up pressure.

LUKE'S SPELL MAKES HIM FEEL LIKE HE'S SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE WITH POWER WHILE HE HAS NONE

IT MAKES HIM FEEL HELPLESS

HE I GUESS HE DID SAY SOMETHING THAT MIGHT SUGGEST THAT

I SAW IT IN HIS EYES.

I'VE FELT THE SAME WAY

OKAY

I'VE DECIDED NOT TO PESTER LUKE ABOUT THIS LATER.

Morning, that same Sunday..

ELLIOT, I NEED TO
TALK TO YOU ABOUT
SOMETHING.

SURE SUSAN
WHAT'S UP?

I'D RATHER NOT
SAY ON THE PHONE.
CAN WE TALK AT
YOUR HOUSE?

UM.. OKAY?

Sunday afternoon, the Dunkel's guest room
with the fold out sofa bed (AKA where Elliot
and Susan record movie reviews for fun)



I NEED YOU TO ASK ME A QUESTION. SO
I CAN ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION SO
I CAN ASK CATALINA THAT QUESTION,
SO SHE CAN ASK ME THAT QUESTION.

UM...
WHAT?

I'M GOING TO ASK
CATALINA WHAT
KIND OF MAGIC SHE
THINKS I WOULD
HAVE BASED ON MY
PERSONALITY

I WANT TO FRAME IT AS
SOMETHING YOU ASKED ME,
AND IT WILL SOUND MORE
NATURAL IF IT'S TECHNICALLY
TRUE. AND IF WE REALLY DID
HAVE THE CONVERSATION.



SO.. YOU
TALK ABOUT
THIS...

ASK HER WHAT MAGIC SHE
THINKS YOU'D HAVE. AND.

THEN YOU SAY YOU THINK
SHE'D HAVE CAT MAGIC, WHICH
GRACE THINKS SHE HAS.. ?

YES

IF SHE DOES HAVE
CAT MAGIC, WON'T IT
BE SUPER OBVIOUS
YOU'RE FISHING?

THAT'S MY
INTENTION YES.

ZAP?



Talk about what magic would suit our personal ties. Suggest cat magic for Catalina

Did Catalina make a "holy carp, Susan knows" face?

Yes

No

Suggest talking about it more later while implying that you also have magic (other than the big hammers)

Come up with some weird magic to say Sarah should have

IF SHE HAS CAT MAGIC, IT WILL BE OBVIOUS TO HER THAT I KNOW, AND IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS TO ME THAT SHE KNOWS THAT I KNOW

IF SHE DOES HAVE CAT MAGIC, I'LL EFFECTIVELY HAVE TOLD HER THAT I KNOW, AND WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT MORE IN PRIVATE LATER



IF SHE DOESN'T, IT'S A FUN LUNCHTIME CONVERSATION, AND CATALINA DOESN'T GET UNNECESSARILY DRAGGED INTO A TANGLED WEB OF STRESSFUL SECRETS AND GOVERNMENT CONSPIRACIES.



AND WE DON'T TELL OUR SECRETS TO THE LOUDEST PERSON WE KNOW



HEY! CATALINA IS FIERCELY LOYAL, AND WOULD NEVER INTENTIONALLY SPREAD OTHER PEOPLE'S SECRETS!

BUT YES, SHE'S TERRIBLE AT KEEPING SECRETS. AND SHE'D BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU THAT



HEY CATALINA. WANNA KNOW A SECRET?

I WAS JUST GOING TO SAY I LIKE PINEAPPLE ON PIZZA

NOOO, DON'T TELL ME! I'M TERRIBLE WITH SECRETS!



BY LUNCH EVERYONE KNEW

OF COURSE, IF SHE AND RHODA DO HAVE MAGIC, AND HAVE PRESUMABLY HAD IT FOR A WHILE, AND WE ONLY KNOW BECAUSE OF MAGIC DREAMS...

...THEN CATALINA'S GOTTEN WAY BETTER AT KEEPING SECRETS.

I DON'T LIKE TESTING WHETHER SHE CAN KEEP SECRETS. BUT IT'S KIND OF IMPORTANT SHE CAN KEEP THESE SECRETS.





I MIGHT NOT WANT
TO TOUCH THEM, OR
BE WITHIN A FEW FEET
OF THEM, BUT DOGS
HAVE A LOT OF
POSITIVE QUALITIES.

HARUMPH.

HONESTLY, I'M
SURPRISED YOU DISLIKE
DOGS SO MUCH.

I DON'T DISLIKE DOGS!
IT'S DIFFERENT TO BE
CALLED A DOG.

ALSO, I'M A
CAT PERSON.

QUALITIES
LIKE PROTECTING
PEOPLE ?

I WASN'T CALLING YOU
A DOG. I WAS JUST
THINKING OF SOMETHING
SUPER HERO-LIKE THAT
WASN'T A SUPER HERO

A WELL TRAINED DOG IS
BASICALLY A LITTLE SUPER
HERO. PROTECTIVE, HEROIC,
VERY LITTLE REGARD FOR
WHAT'S ACTUALLY LEGAL

YOU'RE
RIGHT I'M
SORRY DOG
MAGIC IS
FINE

PLUS IT
PERFECTLY LEADS
INTO YOU SAYING
CATALINA WOULD
HAVE CAT MAGIC.

OKAY,
GOOD.
SO...

WHAT KIND OF
MAGIC DO YOU THINK
I WOULD HAVE?

HM. ICE
MAGIC?

ICE MAGIC?!



YEAH, ICE MAGIC! LIKE,
FREEZE ENEMIES WITHOUT
HURTING THEM SOMEHOW, OR
MAKE COOL ICE WEAPONS!

YOU'RE
SAYING I'M
COLD?

WHAT? NO.

THEN WHY
DO I GET ICE
MAGIC?



I DUNNO IT JUST
FELT RIGHT WHEN
I THOUGHT IT

BECAUSE I'M
SO COLD

NO, I MEAN... YOU
WEAR A LOT OF WINTERLY
COLORS, LIKE BLUE, AND
YOUR HAIR'S BLUE-BLACK.

SO WHY
NOT WATER
MAGIC?



WATER MAGIC
SEEMS LIKE IT'D
BE MESSY

OKAY
THAT'S
FAIR.

AND YOU'RE
COOL! LIKE, SUPER
COOL! SO COOL
YOU'RE LIKE ICE!

YOU'RE FAILING
TO PUT A POSITIVE
SPIN ON THIS, BUT
I'M APPRECIATING
THE EFFORT



A DOG...

IS THAT
REALLY
WHAT BEING
A HERO IS?



I GUESS ANYONE CAN BE A HERO IF THEY SELFLESSLY RISE TO A CHALLENGE AND HELP PEOPLE, BUT IF YOU'RE SPECIFICALLY A HERO WHO FIGHTS, LIKE A SUPER HERO...

...IS BEING
DOG-LIKE
THE THING
TO DO?



A PROBLEM WITH THAT IS DOGS DON'T THINK FOR THEMSELVES

NOT ABOUT MORALITY, ANYWAY

A GOOD DOG WILL JUST AS SOON BE LOYAL TO A DARK LORD OF EVIL AS ANYONE ELSE SO LONG AS THEY'RE GIVEN ENOUGH TREATS AND EAR SCRATCHES.



A HERO NEEDS TO HOLD TO THEIR OWN PRINCIPLES, AND REFUSE TO DO THINGS THAT DON'T FOLLOW THEM. THEY CAN'T GO FULL DOGGO.

BUT VILLAINS CAN DO EXACTLY THAT TOO RIGHT?

THEY JUST HAVE EVIL PRINCIPLES? OR... AT LEAST MISGUIDED ONES?

PRINCIPLES

KICK PUPPIES
CLUB BABY SEALS
STEAL CANDY *

* SPECIFICALLY FROM BABIES

SO A HERO HAS TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES...

ACT ON, AND HOLD TO, THEIR PRINCIPLES...

BUT THOSE PRINCIPLES CAN'T BE SELFISH, AND... THEY PROBABLY HAVE TO BE FLEXIBLE, TOO?



SO YOU HAVE TO STRICTLY STICK TO YOUR PRINCIPLES, EXCEPT WHEN YOU DON'T?

OR MAYBE SOME PRINCIPLES ARE JUST HIGHER PRIORITY THAN OTHERS?

THIS IS COMPLICATED. MAYBE I SHOULD TAKE NOTES.

LIKE, YOU CAN'T BE LIKE THAT JACKASS WIZARD ABRAHAM WHO TRIED TO KILL ELLEN BECAUSE OF SOME VOW TO DESTROY EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING CREATED BY SOME DIAMOND



A DOG...

IS THAT
REALLY
WHAT BEING
A HERO IS?



I GUESS ANYONE CAN BE A HERO IF THEY SELFLESSLY RISE TO A CHALLENGE AND HELP PEOPLE, BUT IF YOU'RE SPECIFICALLY A HERO WHO FIGHTS, LIKE A SUPER HERO...

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Mopervil e University Dorms..



AFTER
COLLEGE...

THAT'S DIFFICULT TO
SAY, REALLY A LOT
COULD CHANGE IN THE
NEXT FEW YEARS.

STILL, IT'LL
PROBABLY BE
SOMETHING
TO DO WITH
SCIENCE OR
ENGINEERING.

OR BOTH, REALLY
MAYBE I COULD
MAKE A MAGIC TECH
RESEARCH AND
MANUFACTURING
COMPANY?

I DON'T LIKE
VIOLENCE.

I PROBABLY WON'T DO
ANYTHING THAT INVOLVES
HURTING PEOPLE.

UHHH...

GOOD?

I WANT TO
DO SOME-
THING THAT
HELPS PEOPLE
WHO FEEL
HELPLESS.

PROTECT
THEM, OR...

HELP THEM
HELP THEM-
SELVES.

I DUNNO.

YOU'VE BEEN STUDYING
PSYCHOLOGY A LOT

WELL, YEAH!
PEOPLE ARE
CONFUSING!

IT'S THE
CLOSEST
THING WE
HAVE TO A
MANUAL!

HELPING
PEOPLE HELP
THEMSELVES.

SEEMS LIKE
ONE WAY TO
DO IT DON'T
YOU THINK?

LKE... A TH-
THERAPIST? ME?

SURE. WHY NOT?
YOU'RE SMART, YOU
HAVE EMPATHY.

I BARELY
UNDERSTAND
PEOPLE!

THAT'S WHY I'M
STUDYING PSYCHOLOGY
IN THE FIRST PLACE!

NOBODY'S BORN QUALIFIED
TO BE A PSYCHIATRIST
EVERYBODY HAS TO GET AN
EDUCATION AND TRAIN.

I MEAN.
I ASSUME
THAT'S
TRUE?

PROBABLY
NOT ETHICAL
TO TEST
THAT

A-AND I'D HAVE TO KEEP
SECRETS! SO MANY SECRETS!

AND I'M PRETTY SURE TO
BECOME A THERAPIST, YOU HAVE
TO GET THERAPY YOURSELF!

I.L.

I'D HAVE TO TALK
TO A THERAPIST!

Monday morning,
Sarah and Susan
arrive at Moperville
North High School...

TODAY'S THE DAY EITHER I
CONFIRM CATALINA HAS MAGIC...

I HAVE MUCH
TO TEACH YOU.



OR I CONFIRM CATALINA DOESN'T
HAVE MAGIC, AND DOESN'T NEED
THE STRESS OF SECRET KEEPING.
OR ENTANGLEMENT WITH MAGIC
GOVERNMENT SECRET KEEPERS.

HONESTLY,
THOUGH...

THE THOUGHT OF
CATALINA IN TEDD'S
BASEMENT...



STILL, HAS TO BE DONE.

DEFINITELY WAIT
UNTIL LUNCH FOOD
GIVES POWER.

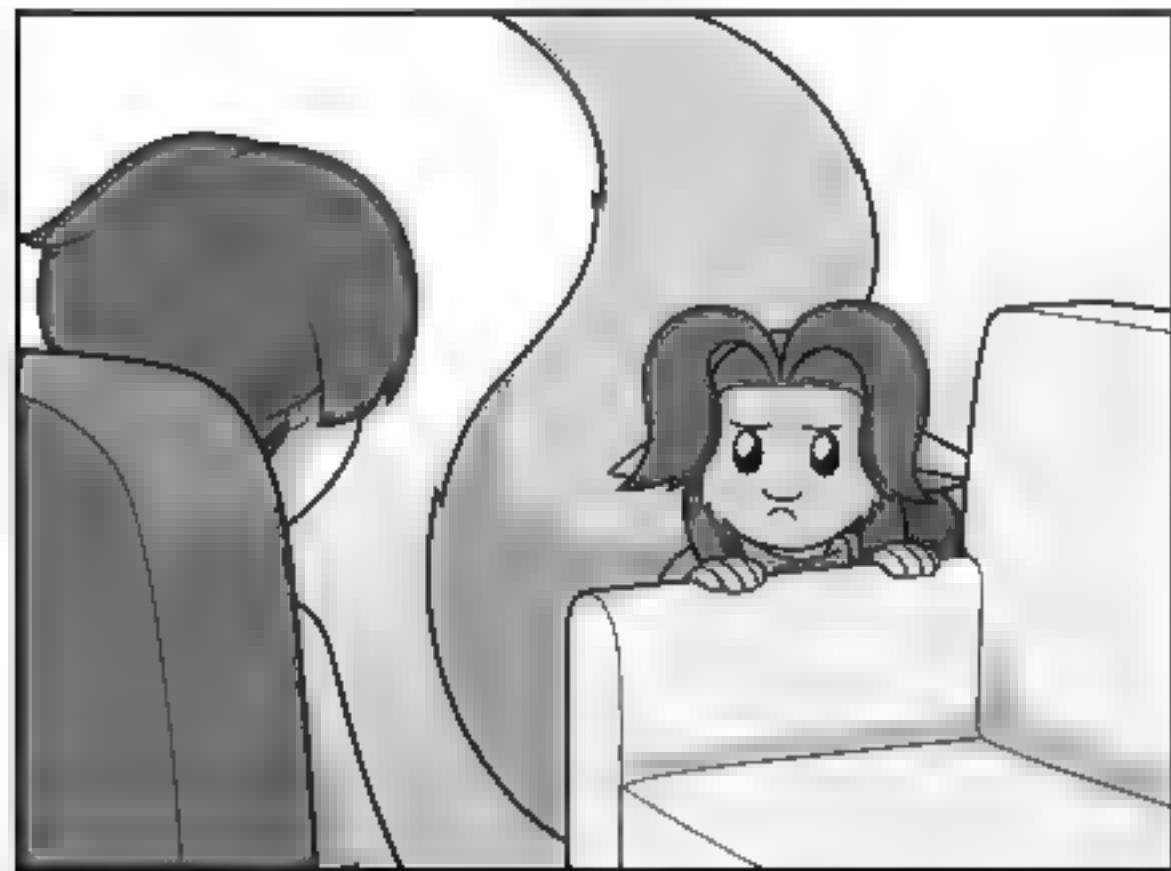


NO ONE IS ALL THERE
ON A MONDAY MORNING

'SUP, DUDES!



WOULD TALKING TO A
THERAPIST BE SO BAD?



WELL, IT WAS JUST
A SUGGESTION.

THERE ARE A
LOT OF WAYS TO
HELP PEOPLE.



YEAH.

YEAH!

LIKE MAYBE
I COULD BE A
MOTIVATIONAL
SPEAKER!



"TAKE CONTROL OF LIFE!
MASTER YOUR DESTINY!
DON'T HIDE FROM
YOUR PROBLEMS!"



OKAY

WHO TOLD
CATALINA ABOUT
CAFFEINE?

HEH HEH HEH

PFFT I DON'T
NEED CAFFEINE!
I'M PUMPED ON
AWESOMENESS!

IN FACT, HERE, HOLD
MY BACKPACK. I'M
GONNA DO A BACKFLIP

YOU WHAT?

HERE I GO!

Wheeeey

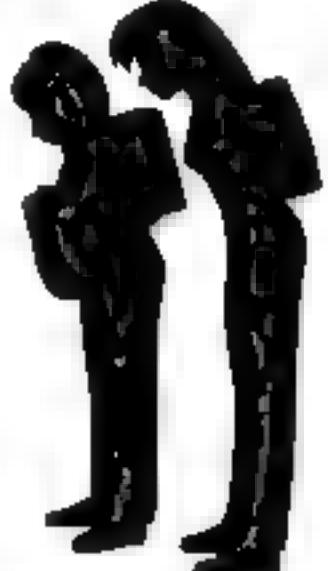
SPLAT

CATALINA!

ARE YOU OKAY?!

ARE YOU
KIDDING? I
LANDED FACE
DOWN!

PROGRESS!



WHAT'S
GOTTEN
INTO
CATALINA?

THIS WOULD BE BUSINESS
AS USUAL IN THE MIDDLE
OF A TUESDAY, BUT FIRST
THING ON A MONDAY?

SOME-
THING'S
UP

CATS CAN
BE WEIRDLY
ENERGETIC.
COULD IT BE
CAT-MAGIC?

NO NO NO. THAT'S
CONFIRMATION BIAS.
SUSAN, AND SHE
PROBABLY WOULD'VE
LANDED ON HER
FEET IF IT WAS?



SHE'S JUST IN A GOOD
MOOD FOR SOME REASON.
SHE'LL TELL US WHY IF
SHE WANTS TO. AND...

WAIT A MINUTE
SOMEONE IN A
RELATIONSHIP WHO'S
IN AN (EXPLICABLY
GOOD MOOD?

HAVE I JUST WATCHED TOO
MANY MOVIES, OR COULD HER
MOOD BE BECAUSE THIS LAST
WEEKEND WAS THE FIRST TIME
SHE AND HER GIRLFRIEND...



SUSAN, ARE YOU
OKAY? YOU LOOK
A LITTLE...

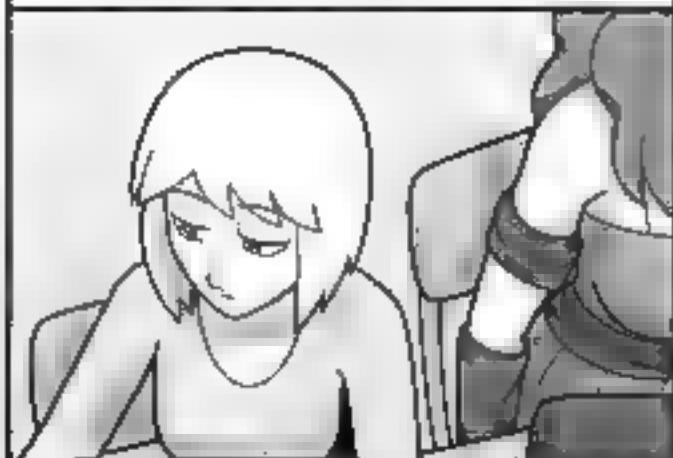
THINGS!



Later, at Moperville South High School, Diane and her girlfriend, Lucy, sat down to lunch

Rhoda had lunch with them, too, but Diane and Lucy brought lunches from home, and Rhoda had scampered off to a lunch line for pizza

Diane, Susan's distant aunt (it's complicated), knew of Susan's intent to find out if Rhoda's girlfriend, and consequently Rhoda, had magic



Do absolutely nothing

Obviously, Rhoda would have told Diane if she had magic, and Susan was wasting her time.



Still, Tedd had said spells suit the magic user, and the size-manipulation magic Rhoda supposedly had would be a perfect fit for her

Rhoda felt small, and Diane knew Rhoda had fantasies about swapping sizes around

Rhoda would only briefly say things that suggested this, but Diane was sure it was true



There was also the mystery of a giant boar that could be explained by Rhoda accidentally growing it, and that was the same day Rhoda met Catalina

If both of them did have magic, Diane knew that them getting it might somehow be linked to that incident.

Whenever Diane considered the possibility of Rhoda having magic and not telling her, however, it was like dividing all the other evidence by zero



All she felt was a logic error, and any possibility of Rhoda having magic was dismissed

She had felt this error many times



DIANE I
FORGOT MY
MATH HOME-
WORK!

WE CAN GET
IT DONE REAL
QUICK!

I FORGOT TO READ THE BOOK
FOR HOMEWORK BECAUSE I WAS
READING ANOTHER BOOK!

I'LL SUM IT
UP FOR YOU!

THERE'S A BOY WHO REALLY
WON'T TAKE THE HINT!

I'LL MAKE SURE HE
BACKS OFF! HEY, LUCY?



I DON'T KNOW IF DOGS
ARE ACTUALLY HAPPY WHEN
THEY DOGGY GRIN!

THEY'RE HAPPY AND
THEY LOVE YOU!

I HAVE MAGIC, AND I MADE
THAT BOAR BIG. AND NOW IT'S
DEAD, AND I KNOW IT TRIED TO
HURT ME, BUT IT WAS A WILD
ANIMAL AND DIDN'T KNOW ANY
BETTER. AND.

THAT'S WHAT
WOULD'VE HAPPENED
STOP OBSESSING.



THAT'S ALL. THERE IS TO IT

♪ PIZZA ♪ PIZZA ♪

LINE
CUT



Humans of this world did not know they could naturally sense the magic power in others, but they could

Even those with knowledge of magic power missed this, because it was most often subtle, context sensitive, and not distinct from other senses.

For example, magic power being a beneficial trait to pass on meant that could make someone appear more attractive

Given that this was roughly equivalent to someone having excellent hygiene, however, no one was going to use this to pick strong magic users out of a crowd

Less subtle were the hairs on the back of one's neck after enraging someone who had titanic magic power



**BACK OF
THE LINE,
JACKASS.**

LUNCH.

JUST CASUALLY BRING UP THE FUN QUESTION, AND GAUGE CATALINA'S RESPONSE TO



BWUHP?

OH, HEY



REALLY? YOU WERE FULL OF ENERGY THIS MORNING. IS EVERYTHING OKAY?

EVERYTHING'S FINE! I MIGHT HAVE LIED A TEENSY LITTLE BIT ABOUT NOT NEEDING CAFFEINE

SPEAKING OF, I'M GOING TO GO GET SOME



SO SHE WASN'T ENERGETIC BECAUSE OF THINGS?

OR MAYBE EXCITEMENT ABOUT THINGS IS WHY SHE DIDN'T SLEEP WELL, OR...

I'VE GOT TO STOP THINKING ABOUT THINGS.



MAYBE WE SHOULD TRY THOSE ARCADE GAMES THE NEXT TIME WE'RE AT THE BOWLING ALLEY?

THAT COULD BE FUN WITHOUT BOYS TRYING TO SHOW US HOW GOOD THEY ARE AT THEM.

WE COULD HAVE A RE-MATCH WITH JUSTIN AND HIS BOYFRIEND SOMEDAY, TOO.

EH, MAYBE JUSTIN'S OKAY BUT HIS BOYFRIEND'S LIKE A FRIGHTENED BUNNY

AND NOT IN A CUTE WAY LIKE RHODA.



SPEAK NG OF... EH?
RHODA, YOU OKAY?

I'M FINE. THERE WAS JUST SOME JERK WHO CUT IN FRONT OF ME IN LINE AND MADE FUN OF MY HEIGHT

WHO WAS IT?!



DON'T WORRY
ABOUT IT I TOLD HIM TO GO TO THE BACK OF THE LINE. THEN HE SAID HE WASN'T HUNGRY AND RAN OFF

YOU... WHAT?

REALLY?

I'M JUST ANNOYED PEOPLE THINK THEY CAN PUSH ME AROUND LIKE THAT



MY ENTIRE PLAN IS BASED ON GAUGING CATALINA'S REACTION TO MY SAYING SHE WOULD HAVE CAT MAGIC. I ALSO NEED TO SOUND NONCHALANT IN CASE SHE DOESN'T HAVE MAGIC.

WITH HER TIRED AND ME... DISTRACTED, I DON'T THINK THIS IS GOING TO WORK!

I-I THINK YOU'D HAVE CAT MAGIC!

OH WELL I'LL DO IT TOMORROW

IT'S NOT LIKE THERE'S ANY RUSH.

AND THEN THE REST OF MONDAY HAPPENED

Wordy spell books!

Confused Teddi

New side effects and imitations!

THERE'S A RUSH!



No Grace-dream explaining just what-the-heck-even yet!

IF CATALINA AND HER GIRLFRIEND HAVE MAGIC, THEY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS!

Tuesday. Lunch. Again

JUST DO IT! IT'S OKAY IF YOU'RE TOO OBVIOUS! IF SHE DOESN'T HAVE MAGIC, SHE'LL JUST THINK YOU'RE AWKWARD, AND IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO GET THIS DONE!

SO HEY ELLIOT ASKED ME WHAT KIND OF MAGIC I THINK HE'D HAVE BASED ON HIS PERSONALITY AND IT WAS FUN. CATALINA, I THINK YOU'D HAVE CAT MAGIC.

THANK GOODNESS OBVIOUS IS OKAY



CAT MAGIC?

BOO.



"BOO"?

THAT'S SO BORING!



YEAH LIKE MY NAME'S CATALINA BUT THAT'S THE ONLY CAT-LIKE THING ABOUT ME!

IT'S SO NOT!

SEE, IF I WAS CHOOSING SOMETHING FOR ME, IT WOULD BE

LOUDSPEAKER MAGIC!

LOUDSPEAKER MAGIC.

YEAH, LIKE, MAKE MY VOICE SUPER LOUD, AND DO SONIC STUFF!

LIKE THAT GUY WITH THE HAIR FROM THAT ANIME!

"I ATTACK BY TALKING BOOM!"



I CANNOT REFUTE THIS LOGIC

WHAT ABOUT...

DOG MAGIC?

REALLY,
SARAH?

DOG MAGIC? IS
THAT BECAUSE
OF LOYALTY AND
BRAVERY OR
SOMETHING?

BECAUSE IF
IT'S ABOUT
DROOLING
AND BUTT
SNIFFING...

I WAS
THINKING
LOYALTY AND
BARKING.

BUT YEAH, BRAVERY!

I'LL TAKE IT!

I ACTUALLY SAID
ELLIOT WOULD
HAVE DOG MAGIC.

YOU DID? WELL,
I GUESS WE ARE
KINDA SIMILAR.

MAYBE I
SHOULD TAKE
JU JITSU

CATALINA ISN'T
THIS GOOD A LIAR.
IF SHE HAD CAT
MAGIC AND
THOUGHT I KNEW,
SHE WOULDN'T
REACT LIKE THIS.

SHE DIDN'T
JUMP AT THE
DOG OPTION,
EITHER, WHICH
SHE MIGHT'VE
DONE IF TRYING
TO HIDE HAVING
CAT MAGIC.

MAYBE SHE
REALLY DOESN'T
HAVE MAGIC?

IF PICKING MAGIC FOR YOU, SUSAN,
I THINK I'D GO WITH... ICE MAGIC?

OH, COME ON!

MAYBE I
SHOULD TAKE
JU JITSU

WHAT ABOUT...

DOG MAGIC?

REALLY,
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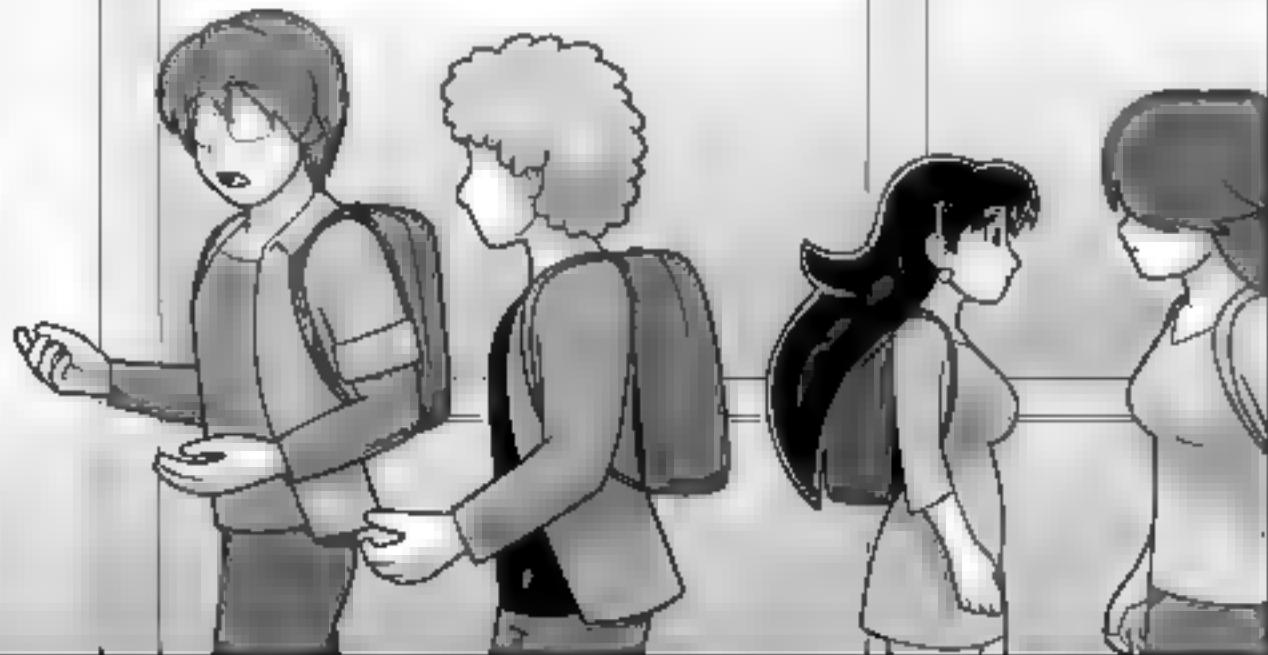
MAYBE I
SHOULD TAKE
JU JITSU

Though a fun discussion was had, and many assurances given by Sarah and Catalina that Susan was "just that cool", there was nothing to suggest that Catalina really did have magic.

It was eventually agreed that Sarah would be able to create illusions of her drawings, but this did not actually resolve anything.



LUKE WAS RIGHT



I DON'T REALLY KNOW RHODA THAT WELL

I'M WORRIED HOW SHE'D REACT TO KNOWING I'M AN ALIEN-HUMAN-SQUIRREL-AJEN HYBRID

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN TRUST HER WITH MY SECRETS.

I DON'T TRUST HER ENOUGH TO JUST TELL HER EVERYTHING.

I'M NOT COMFORTABLE TELLING HER MY SECRETS WITHOUT KNOWING ONE OF HERS.

AS MUCH AS I DON'T WANT TO PUT IT THAT WAY, I DO WANT LEVERAGE

I WANT TO BECOME CLOSER FRIENDS WITH HER, BUT...

...ARE WE EVEN FRIENDS NOW?

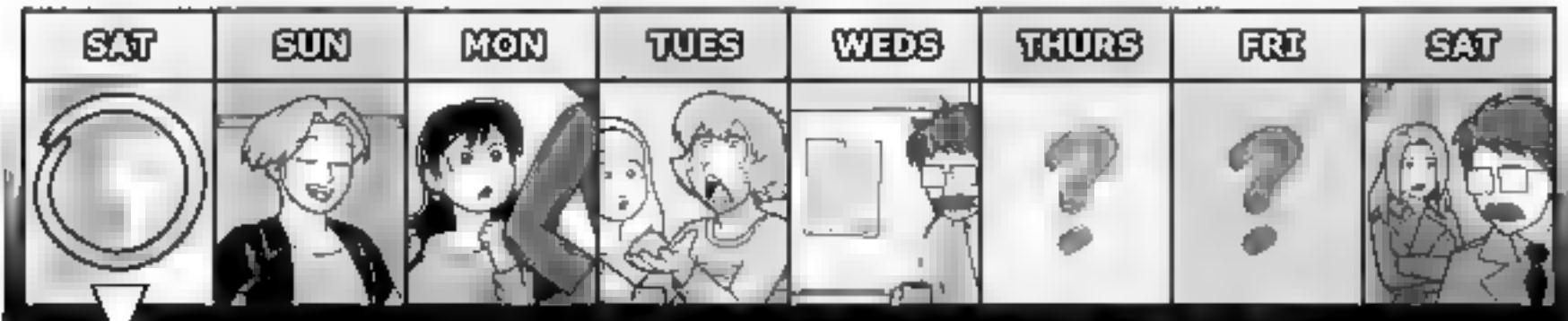
ARE WE JUST ACQUAINTANCES WHO LIKE EACH OTHER?

SO LONG AS I HAVE TO HIDE WHO I AM FROM PEOPLE...

...IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE FOR ME TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS?

IS THAT FRIENDSHIP?

Three days ago, the Saturday of the party, and of Rhoda and Catalina seeing a movie late at night.



Did you sleep better last night?



I think so. Adrenaline is finally coming down after Saturday.

As scary as it was, it really left me feeling PUMPED!

How are you doing?

Good! I haven't gotten any more chances to be assertive, but



YOUNG LADY!



NO TEXTING
IN THESE
HALLS OF
LEARNING!



THIS IS A SANCTUARY OF ENLIGHTENMENT NOT A PLACE TO GOSSIP ABOUT BOYS!

GET TO CLASS!

MY CLASS IS RIGHT THERE, AND I'M TEXTING TO MAKE SURE MY GIRLFRIEND IS OKAY

I WILL BE DONE IN A MOMENT



Okay, so I got a detention, but I DID get a chance to be assertive



WE'RE NOT
GOING TO GET TO
THE CAR IN TIME!

CATALINA
EMERGENCY
PLAN!

WHAT? I
WAS JOKING
WHEN I--

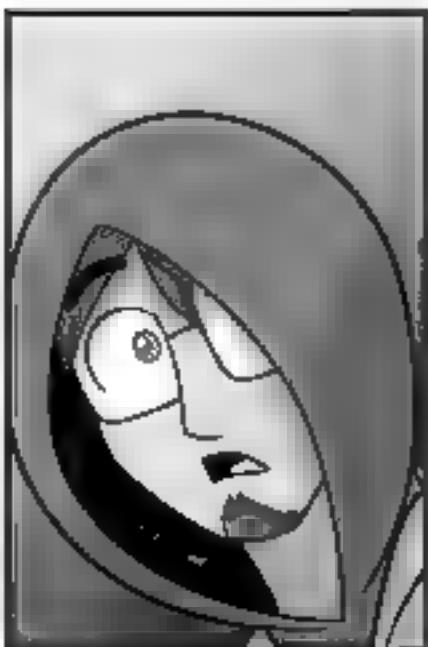
TURN LEFT
THERE AND
DO IT! FAST!

O-KAY!



STOP IT! THIS IS THE
STUPIDEST THING YOU
GUYS HAVE EVER—







Luke did not think he would see any magic when he used his ability that night



He's uncomfortable late at night, and did it to convince himself that there was nothing scary out there.



Instead, he saw Catalina and Rhoda



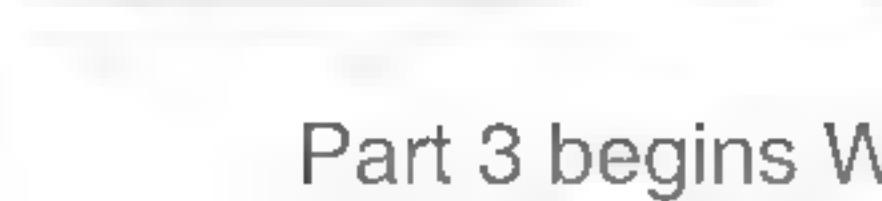
He did not point them out so his friends would approach them



He pointed them out as a warning



A warning to stay away..



from the monster.

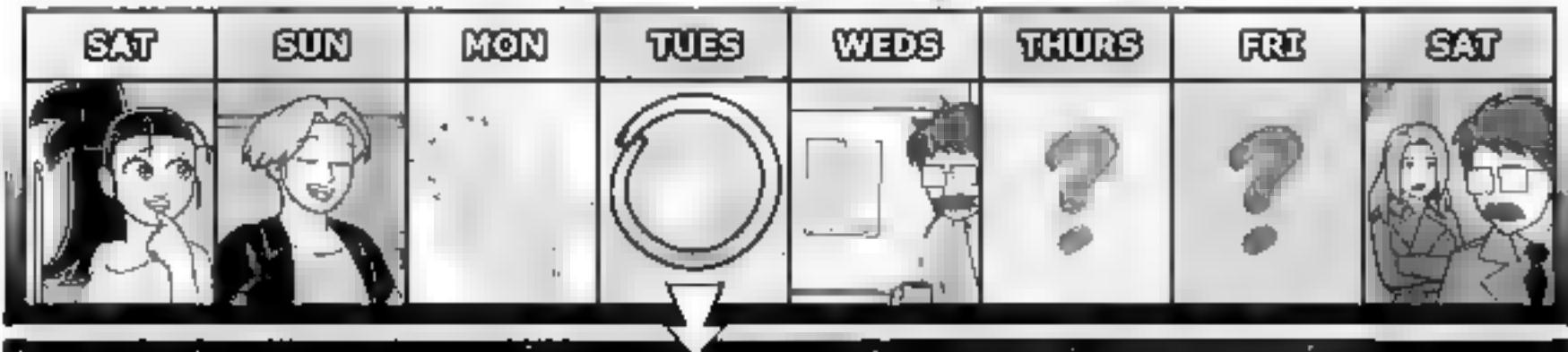


Balance Part 3

Monday right before gym for Tedd and Elliot, and before realizations about spells working differently



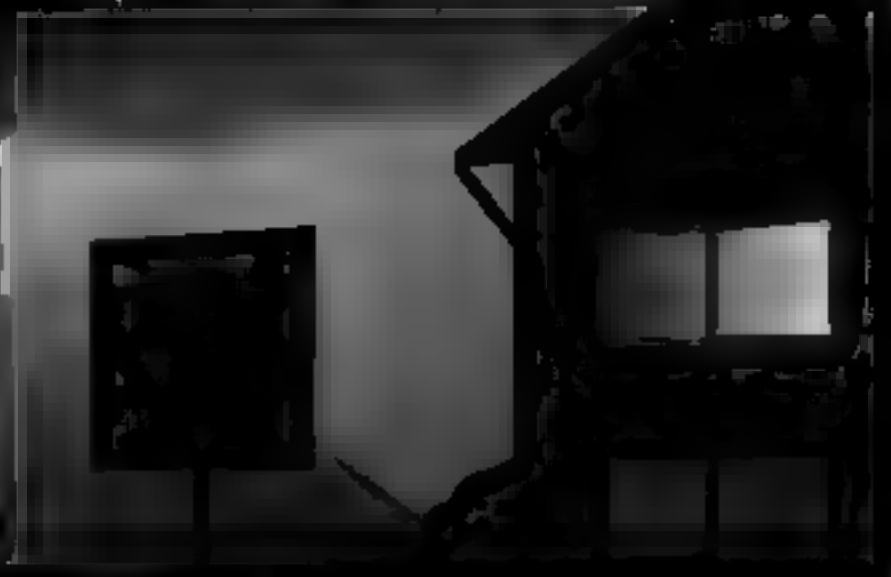
Late Tuesday, the day after it became clear spells were behaving differently.



In a hotel in Colorado, Special Agent Wolf was on the phone with his boss, Arthur, who was the head of paranormal investigations in Moperville, and its surrounding areas

Normally, Moperville wouldn't be the center of anything, but the abnormal frequency with which it had paranormal cases made a permanent presence mandatory

Incidentally, Moperville was nowhere near Colorado



THE TWO OF THEM AGREE, FOR ONCE

THEY THINK OUR SPELLS AND THOSE IN THE WANDS HAVEN'T ACTUALLY CHANGED...

...AND WE'RE JUST SCRUB TRASH WHO NEVER KNEW HOW TO USE OUR SPELLS PROPERLY

I'M REASONABLY CERTAIN I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT?

I DID THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE EXPERTS AND THEY'RE LAW ENFORCEMENT IT'S INEXCUSABLE



AM I TO TAKE IT THEY ARE HAVING NO TROUBLE WITH THEIR SPELLS?

NONE. THEY WERE TAUGHT TO MANUALLY CONTROL ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR SPELLS

THEY MIGHT NEVER HAVE EVEN NOTICED ANYTHING WAS DIFFERENT

I FEAR WE TRULY ARE SCRUB TRASH.

PLEASE, SIR, IT JUST SOUNDS WEIRD WHEN YOU SAY IT

I WILL BE AS HIP AND COOL WITH MY SLANG AS I SO CHOOSE, AGENT WOLF



DOES THIS
MEAN THE
WANDS ARE
SALVAGEABLE?

IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO
USE THE WANDS SAFELY.

ER-HEM!

BUT IT'S NOT
RECOMMENDED.

AGENT KNIGHT MIGHT HAVE ONLY
NEEDED TO SPECIFY HIS TARGET USING
WILL RATHER THAN POINTING, AND
SPECIFY IN A SIMILAR MANNER THAT
HE ONLY WANTED TO STUN THEM.

OR HE
MIGHT HAVE
NEEDED TO
QUANTIFY
AN AMOUNT
OF POWER
IN SOME
UNKNOWN
WAY

OR THE SPELL MIGHT
JUST NOT WORK THE
WAY WE WANT AT ALL
WHEN "IN MANUAL"

SO THERE'S NO WAY TO
KNOW BUT TO EXPERIMENT

CUSTOM
SPELLS
MADE BY
ME

NO. WE
NEED NEW
WANDS
WITH NEW
SPELLS.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT MY
MISSION? DO WE COME BACK?
THE FOSSIL CAN JUST TRACK
HIM DOWN AGAIN LATER.

THE WANDS USE CUSTOM
SPELLS WITH NO SPELL BOOKS
CONNECTED WITH THEM. SO
YEAH. WE'D NEED TO RISK MORE
AGENTS GETTING SHOCKED

FOSSIL? I
WAS NEVER
IN THE
GROUND.

HE'S
CALLING
YOU A
DINOSAUR.

WHAT'S A
DINOSAUR?

NO.

"MAGUS" DUNKEL
IS TOO POWERFUL
TO IGNORE.

KEEP ON HIS
TRAIL, BUT DO NOT
ENGAGE UNLESS
THERE'S NO OTHER
CHOICE

RE-MASTER
YOUR OWN SPELLS
BEST YOU CAN
MAKE SURE YOUR
"DEPUTIES" DON'T
DO ANYTHING
STUPID. AND KEEP
TRAINING THE
TRA NEE.

GIVEN THE SITUATION. SHOULDN'T I
AT LEAST SEND THE TRA NEE HOME?

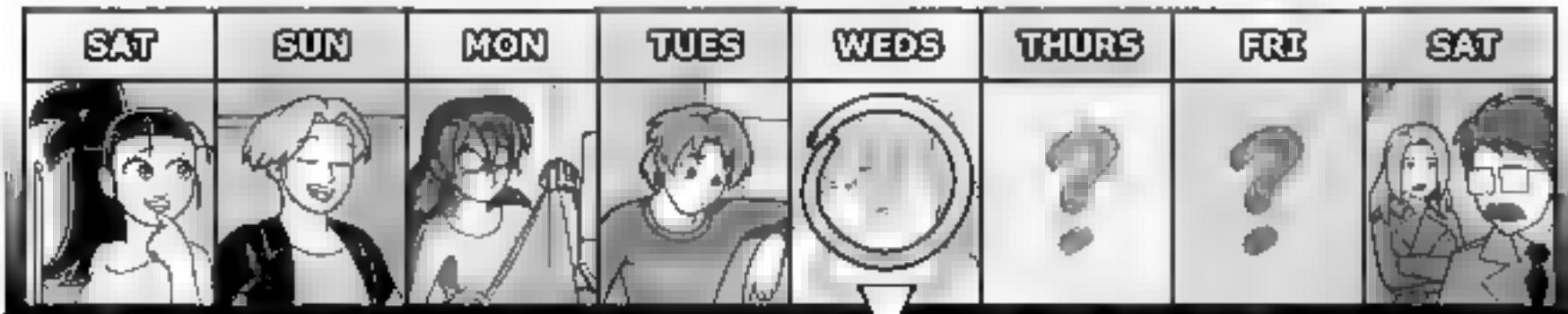
NO SHE HAS
A TALENT FOR
DETECTING
PEOPLE WHO
ARE USING
CONCEALMENT
MAGIC. SHE'S
INVULNERABLE.

PLEASE, SIR.
SHE'S VERY
GRUMPY, AND I
DON'T KNOW
HOW HER HAIR
WORKS

NONETHELESS



Wednesday morning, very much before school, and significantly prior to brains working properly



In a dream the night before, Grace had a barrel of exposition thrown at her by the Emissary of Magic.

She had learned of spells shifting from being mostly automated to requiring more manual decisions.

The potential to make spells easier to cast by way of arguably logical tradeoffs

And that uryooms, a species Grace was partly a hybrid of, were supposedly NOT from outer space.

Grace, who had not yet learned that casually leaving notes with shocking information was maybe not the best idea, thought she would discuss what she had learned with Mr. Verres and Tedd in the evening



Instead, before school that Wednesday morning was a hasty scramble to make sure Mr. Verres could explain everything Grace had learned as though it was Mr. Verres who had been visited by the Emissary in his dreams.

This was because he had every intention of claiming exactly that.



THE POSSIBILITY THAT SPELLS
CAN BE PROGRAMMED IS...

HONESTLY TERRIFYING. BUT
WE CAN'T JUST IGNORE IT IF IT'S
POSSIBLE IF NOTHING ELSE. WE
NEED TO KNOW WHAT OTHERS
MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO

AND
WE DO
NEED NEW
SPELLS
AND
WANDS.

"IF" BEING THE
KEYWORD. TEDD'S
DOCUMENTATION
BEFORE HE KNEW
HE WAS A SEER
WAS SLOPPY, AND
AFTER HE FOUND
OUT HE WAS A
SEER?

A QUICK NOTE
ABOUT BEING
A SEER, THE
GLOVE BEING
A "FAILURE",
AND NOT A
SINGLE LINE
OF THE CODE
HE USED!

SIMPLY CALLING IT A FAILURE IS
ANTITHETICAL TO BEING A SCIENTIST,
AND NOT REALIZING WHAT HE HAD
WITH THAT GLOVE IS JUST... JUST...

UGH. SCRUB
TRASH, IS ALL
I'M SAYING.

HM...

TEDD IS VERY
SCIENCE MINDED,
BUT ALSO VERY
SENSITIVE BEING
THAT MISTAKEN
ABOUT WHAT THE
GLOVE DID MIGHT
HAVE BEEN
UPSETTING..

IT'S SOMETHING
TO WORK ON.

IN TEDD'S
DEFENSE, YOU
ONLY JUST
NOTICED HOW
AMAZING THIS
BREAKTHROUGH
IS NOW

YEAH, I'M GOING TO
LEVEL WITH YOU ARTHUR.
I D DON'T READ TEDD'S
NOTES BEFORE TONIGHT

I WAS BUSY, TEDD'S THE ONLY
OTHER SEER WE KNOW OF IN
AMERICA, AND HE'S THE SON
OF EDWARD VERRES.

THE HIGHER UPS
MIGHT NOT HAVE
SIGNED OFF ON IT?

WHAT?! BUT I TOLD
YOU TO ASSESS TEDD'S
COMPETENCE!

WAS THERE
ANY CHANCE HE
WASN'T GOING TO
GET THE LAB?

THAT'S WHAT
I THOUGHT

THIS DOES EXPLAIN A LOT, INCLUDING WHY I COULDN'T REPLICATE ANY OF THE PROBLEMS PEOPLE WERE HAVING WITH MY OWN MAGIC.

ARE MOST AGENTS NOT TAUGHT TO DO THAT?

APPARENTLY YOU DON'T KNOW?

I WAS NEVER IN CHARGE OF ANYONE'S TRAINING AND I WAS ALREADY CONSIDERED OVERQUALIFIED WHEN I WAS HIRED

I WAS TAUGHT FROM THE BEGINNING TO TAKE MORE MANUAL CONTROL OF MY SPELLS.

AGENTS ARE SUPPOSED TO STRICTLY STICK TO STANDARDIZED SPELLS USING WANDS ANYWAY, WITH EXCEPTIONS MADE FOR VERY USEFUL PERSONAL SPELLS.

MY ONLY CONCERN WITH THIS INFORMATION IS THE EMISSARY'S CLAIM THAT URYUOMS ARE NOT FROM OUTER SPACE

"ORIGINALITY?"

ANY URYUOM YOU'RE LIKELY TO SEE TODAY WAS BORN HERE, AS WERE THEIR PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, ETC.

BEING MISTAKEN WOULDN'T BE THAT WEIRD IF THEIR HISTORY HERE GOES BACK FAR ENOUGH!

I'VE KNOWN MANY URYUOMS, AND NOT ONCE HAS ANYONE CLAIMED THEIR SPECIES WASN'T ORIGINALLY FROM OUTER SPACE.

I SUPPOSE IT'S POSSIBLE THEY'RE MISTAKEN ABOUT THEIR OWN HISTORY BUT...

HUMAN HISTORY IS FULL OF HOLES, GUESSWORK, AND BIAS!

WHAT'S THE EARLIEST RECORD OF URYUOMS ON EARTH?

THE OLDEST EVIDENCE OF URYUOMS ON EARTH DATES BACK TO THE MYSTERIOUS COLLAPSE OF THE BRONZE AGE.

SO AROUND THIRTY TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

"THE MYSTERIOUS COLLAPSE OF THE BRONZE AGE"?

URYUOMS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT

PROBABLY

ANYWAY, THE BRONZE AGE ISN'T RELEVANT RIGHT NOW

AND HASN'T BEEN FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

THE IMPORTANT THING IS I'M GOING TO LEAVE OUT ANY MENTION OF URYUOMS, AND PASS ON THE VERIFIABLE INFORMATION WE ACTUALLY NEED RIGHT NOW

YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO TELL THEM YOU HAD THIS DREAM?

OF COURSE.

BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO DRAW TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO ME

GRACE, YOU ARE A VERY TALENTED VERY POWERFUL PERSON.

THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH POWER YOU COULD MAKE NERVOUS, OR PEOPLE WHO WOULD WANT TO USE YOU.

I WANT TO KEEP YOU AS UNDER THE RADAR AS POSSIBLE

YOU DON'T TRUST ARTHUR ENOUGH TO TELL HIM THE TRUTH.

NO, I DON'T

STOP FIDDLING WITH YOUR TIE TEDD.

THIS LAB IS A BIG OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU AND IT COULD MAKE A BAD IMPRESSION

EVEN WORSE IF I HAD TO TE IT FOR YOU AGAIN

I REALLY NEED TO TEACH YOU HOW TO TE ONE YOURSELF

TO BE CLEAR I THINK THE ONLY WAY YOU'RE NOT GETTING THIS LAB IS IF SOMEONE OTHER THAN ARTHUR SHUTS IT DOWN, AND I DON'T THINK WE'D BE HERE IF THAT WERE LIKELY

I JUST THINK MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION BY BEING PROFESSIONAL COULD HELP OPEN UP EVEN MORE FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES.

I THOUGHT EDWARD HAD A SON.

I'M COMPLICATED. CAN WE FOCUS?



I ALSO DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT THE LAB.

WHAT? WHY WOULDN'T I?

WE HAVEN'T HEARD THE DETAILS YET. WHAT EXACTLY YOU'D BE EXPECTED TO DO, HOW MUCH YOU'D NEED TO DO EVERY WEEK ON TOP OF YOUR COLLEGE CLASSES...

I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO SAY YES.

I'LL BE PROUD OF YOU NO MATTER WHAT YOU DECIDE



ARE YOU WORRIED THEY'LL WANT ME TO DO THINGS I WON'T BE OKAY WITH?

NO, NOT REALLY. I IMAGINE ARTHUR WILL WANT TO KEEP YOU HAPPY.

HE ALSO WON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD GET ME KICKING DOWN HIS DOOR.

BUT IF HE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THOSE THINGS. ?



ARTHUR. IS SOMEONE WITH A STRONG SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG...

...AND BELIEVES IN THE NEEDS OF THE MANY OUTWEIGHING THE NEEDS OF THE FEW

WHICH SOUNDS GOOD, BUT WE'VE NEVER AGREED ON HOW MUCH WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO DO TO HELP "THE FEW"

THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE I'VE HELPED WHO HE WOULDN'T HAVE HELPED.

THINGS HE HAS DONE OR NOT DONE I WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO DO, OR NOT DO.



HE IS.. "A MONSTER IN SERVICE OF THE GREATER GOOD"

YOU THINK HE'S A MONSTER?

NO. HE DOES.

HE CALLS HIMSELF A MONSTER

ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHER THINGS IF HE'S BEEN DRINKING.



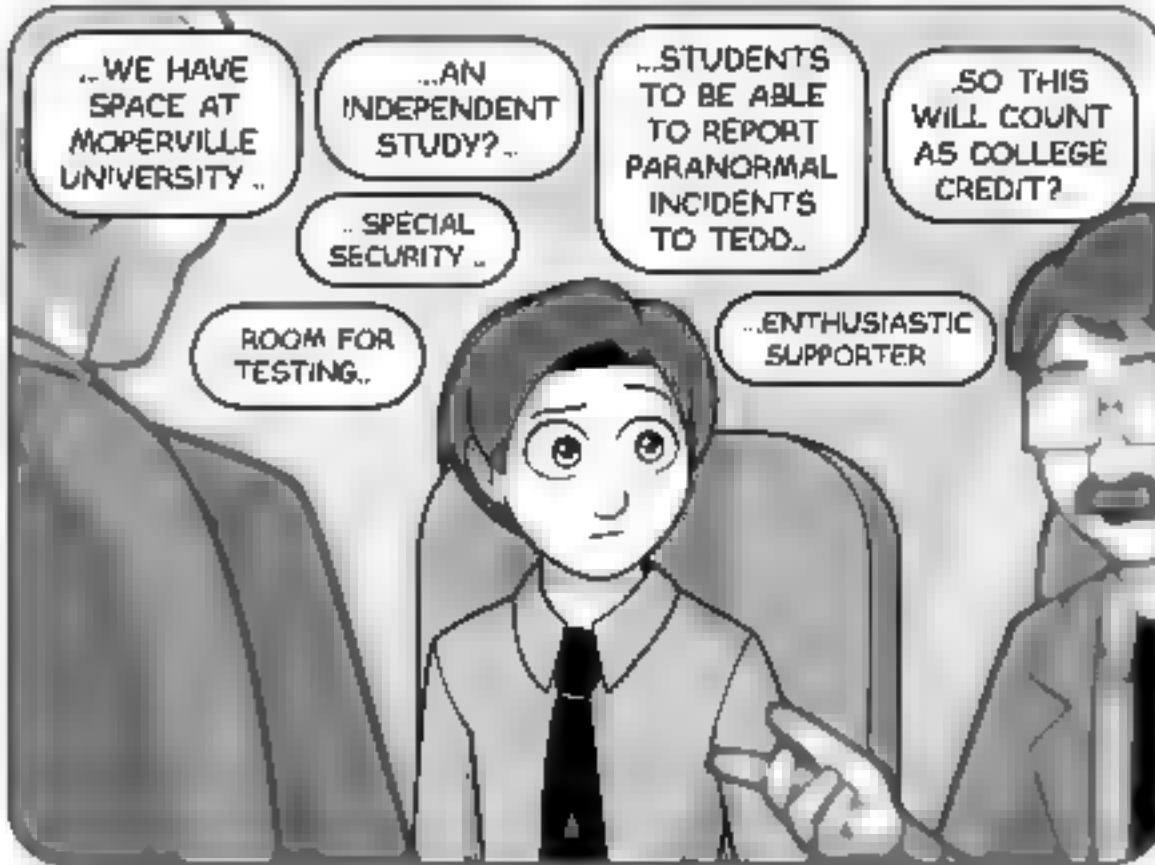
BUT LIKE I SAID, HE'S GOING TO WANT TO KEEP BOTH OF US HAPPY

WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE CHANGING WITH MAGIC. I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT ANY OF THAT

THAT SAID. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN AND DON'T TAKE TOO MUCH FOR GRANTED, BUT IT SHOULD BE FINE TO ACCEPT A LAB FROM HIM

HE'S LIKELY GOING BACK INTO RETIREMENT SOON, ANYWAY





MY APOLOGIES FOR MAKING
THE TWO OF YOU WAIT

I WAS ON THE PHONE WITH A V.I.P.
WHO TOOK HINTS THAT I NEEDED TO
GO AS INVITATIONS TO KEEP TALKING.

BELIEVE ME I
UNDERSTAND.

THE FREQUENCY WITH
WHICH I'VE HAD TO
DEAL WITH THAT HAS
ONLY INCREASED SINCE
I HAD YOUR JOB.

IT IS
GOOD TO
SEE YOU
AGAIN,
TEDD.

EH?

AH, YES!
HELLO!

GOOD TO
SEE YOU
TOO!

PLEASE HAVE A SEAT

I'M NOT... A HUNDRED PERCENT CLEAR ON WHAT MY DAD DOES NOW.

WHEN IT COMES TO EXTRATERRESTRIAL, MAGICAL, AND/OR INTERDIMENSIONAL BEINGS, YOUR FATHER IS AN UNPARALLELED DIPLOMAT

WE'D BE ON FAR WORSE TERMS WITH MANY SUCH BEINGS IF NOT FOR HIM. IT'S THE PRIMARY REASON WHY YOUR FATHER HAS SO MANY POWERFUL ALLIES.

HE HAS A TALENT FOR NEGOTIATING WITH, AND UNDERSTANDING, BEINGS WHO ARE DIFFERENT FROM HIMSELF

OH THE IRONY

HM?

UH... NOTHING. JUST...

IT WAS NOTHING.

YOU WERE NERVOUS ABOUT ME SEEING YOU IN YOUR PRESENT FORM.

AND YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT TO YOUR FATHER.

YOU WERE LESS CONCERNED WITH HOW I'D REACT, AND MORE WORRIED I'D SAY SOMETHING IN FRONT OF HIM, WEREN'T YOU.

I WON'T PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND
WHAT YOU'RE FEELING.

BUT YOUR
FATHER IS
ONE OF
THE MOST
ACCEPTING
PEOPLE I
HAVE EVER
KNOWN.

I'M SURE HE WOULD—

HE'S ALREADY
SEEN ME AS
A GIRL.

HE LOOKS AT ME WITH A
MIX OF DISAPPOINTMENT
AND WORRY

HE SAYS
"IT CAN'T BE
HEALTHY"

I DON'T
WANT THIS
MEETING TO
BE... ABOUT
THAT

HAVE YOU
TOLD HIM HOW
YOU FEEL?

EXPLAINED
WHY

I DON'T KNOW
WHY! SOMETIMES
I FEEL LIKE A
GIRL! SOMETIMES
A GUY!

I DON'T KNOW
WHY I FEEL THAT
WAY! I JUST DO!
ALWAYS HAVE!

HOW DO YOU
EXPLAIN SOMETHING
AS NATURAL AND
AUTOMATIC TO YOU
AS BREATHING?!

PERHAPS,
YOU JUST
DID.

I CAN'T
REMEMBER
NOT FEELING
THIS WAY!



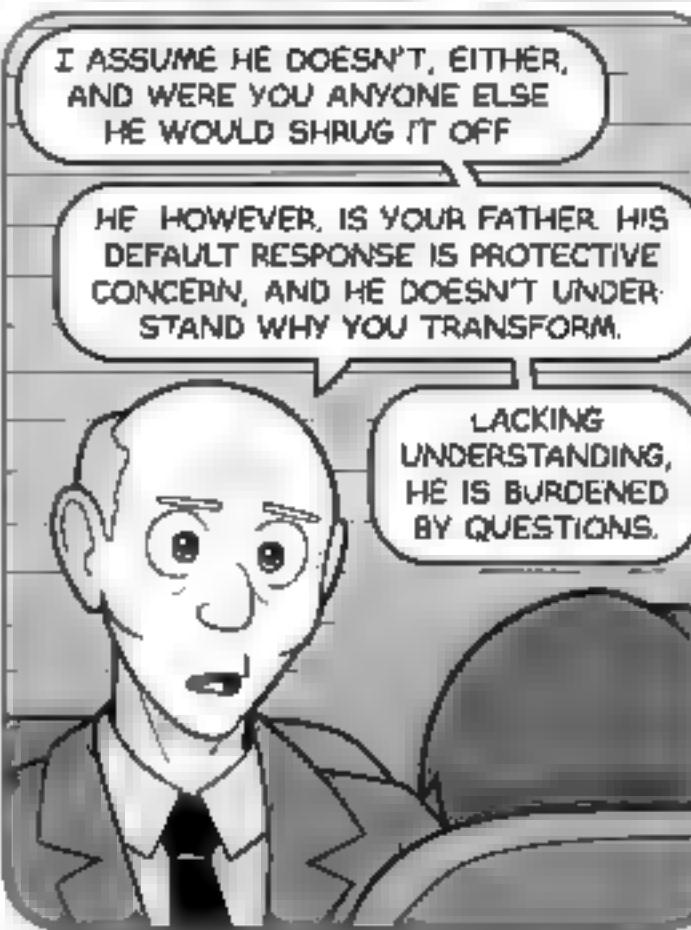
I DO NOT DOUBT ANYTHING YOU HAVE SAID. AND I WOULD NOT SAY WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY IF I DID NOT HAVE SUCH A LONG HISTORY WITH YOUR FATHER.



IT'S POSSIBLE HE HAS A BLIND SPOT I AM UNAWARE OF BUT I WOULD BE ASTONISHED IF YOUR FATHER'S ATTITUDE CAME FROM A PLACE OF BIGOTRY



I... DON'T UNDERSTAND.



I ASSUME HE DOESN'T, EITHER, AND WERE YOU ANYONE ELSE HE WOULD SHRUG IT OFF



HE, HOWEVER, IS YOUR FATHER. HIS DEFAULT RESPONSE IS PROTECTIVE CONCERN, AND HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU TRANSFORM.



LACKING UNDERSTANDING, HE IS BURDENED BY QUESTIONS.



"IS THIS TEDD'S WAY OF COPING WITH SOMETHING?"



"WILL THIS NEGATIVELY AFFECT HOW PEOPLE TREAT TEDD?"



"DID THE TRANSFORMATION TECHNOLOGY I LET TEDD USE AFFECT TEDD'S PSYCHOLOGY?"



IT DIDN'T—I'VE FELT THIS WAY FOREVER! IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT!



I'M NOT SAYING YOU DID ANYTHING WRONG



IT SOUNDS LIKE HE APPROACHED THIS IN AN UPSETTING WAY THAT MADE YOU UNCOMFORTABLE



YOU'VE MADE CLEAR THAT THIS IS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN, AND FRANKLY YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN IT



NONTHELESS, I THINK YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FATHER WOULD IMPROVE IF YOU TWO WERE TO TALK ABOUT THIS.



I DO NOT THINK HE KNOWS THAT

I'M... NOT
SURE I CAN.

IF YOU'D LIKE,
I COULD TALK
TO YOUR FATHER
FOR YOU

N-NO!

THAT'S NOT...

I MEAN.

MAYBE I'LL TALK TO
HIM EVENTUALLY...

BUT IT NEEDS
TO BE ME SAYING
STUFF, Y'KNOW?



PERHAPS IT
SHOULD BE

MY OFFER
REMAINS OPEN.

UH, THANK YOU, I...

IT'S NICE TO KNOW
THAT YOU UNDERSTAND,
AT LEAST

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND

GENDER IDENTITIES BEYOND
THE PHYSICAL ARE CONFUSING
AND ALIEN TO ME.



WHAT?
BUT... I
MEAN
YOU
JUST...

THE ONLY
QUESTION YOU
EVEN ASKED
WAS WHEN YOU
FIRST REALIZED
WHO I WAS!

YOU'VE DONE
NOTHING BUT
BE ACCEPTING
SINCE THEN!

OF COURSE I HAVE!
BECAUSE THIS... IS
AMERICA



THE IDEAL AMERICA ASPIRES TO IS

FREEDOM

A NATION FULL OF PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, EACH WITH OUR OWN BELIEFS, HOPES, AND DREAMS!

WE ARE NEVER ALL GOING TO PERFECTLY UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER!

FOR AMERICA TO TRULY BE THE LAND OF THE FREE, WHERE PEOPLE CAN LIVE AS THEIR TRUE SELVES, WE MUST HAVE PEOPLE WILLING TO ACCEPT EACH OTHER WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING!



UNDERSTANDING BEING A REQUIREMENT FOR ACCEPTANCE IS ANTITHETICAL TO THE AMERICAN DREAM, AND INTOLERANCE IS WHY WE HAVE NOT YET ACHIEVED THAT DREAM!

AS A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, ANYTHING LESS THAN UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF OUR DIFFERENCES WOULD BE TO BETRAY AMERICA!



PLEASE NOTE THAT I'M TALKING
ABOUT ACCEPTING PERSONAL
DIFFERENCES, NOT BEHAVIOR THAT
IS ACTIVELY HARMFUL TO OTHERS.

NOR AM I SAYING WE SHOULD
ACCEPT INTOLERANCE. I AM
SPECIFICALLY AGAINST INTOLERANCE



IF THOSE THINGS GO AGAINST WHAT YOU BELIEVE, THEN WHY...

THERE ARE THINGS THAT, IF ALLOWED WOULD CREATE A NET-LOSS IN FREEDOM.

I, FOR EXAMPLE BELIEVE IN THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS.

IF, HOWEVER, A PERSON WERE ALLOWED TO HAVE INTERCONTINENTAL MISSILES IN THEIR BACKYARD, JUST THOSE BEING THERE WOULD BE A THREAT TO EVERYONE'S SAFETY



THINGS THAT WOULD ENDANGER THE RIGHTS, FREEDOM, AND SAFETY OF OTHERS.



NOW, AS YOU MIGHT HAVE NOTICED, THAT EXAMPLE WAS RIDICULOUS. ANYONE GETTING SUCH WEAPONS IS IMPROBABLE TO THE POINT OF EFFECTIVELY BEING IMPOSSIBLE

MAGIC IS DIFFERENT. A SINGLE PERSON WITH DANGEROUS MAGIC HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ENDANGER THE RIGHTS, FREEDOM, AND SAFETY OF COUNTLESS OTHERS.

WE CAN PREVENT PEOPLE FROM GETTING THEM, OR THE PARTS FOR MAKING THEM.

EVEN IF WE DIDN'T PREVENT IT, IT WOULD BE VERY OBVIOUS THEY HAD THEM.

WHAT'S MORE WHO HAS IT WON'T NECESSARILY BE OBVIOUS. NOR WILL THE DAMAGE THEY CAUSE.



IF SOMEONE KNOWS ONE OF SEVERAL WAYS TO ACQUIRE MAGIC ON THEIR OWN, THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO TO STOP THEM.

AND SO, TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS, FREEDOM, AND SAFETY OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, WE KEEP SECRETS.

BY THE TIME WE'RE EVEN AWARE OF IT, SOMETHING BIG ENOUGH FOR US TO NOTICE HAS HAPPENED.

WORK FROM THE SHADOWS.

LIMIT THE RIGHTS OF A SMALL NUMBER OF MAGIC USERS.

IT IS A NET POSITIVE FOR EVERYTHING I BELIEVE IN.



THE ONLY PREVENTATIVE MEASURE WE'VE EVER HAD HAS BEEN TO HIDE HOW TO ACQUIRE MAGIC POWER.



BUT I AM A MONSTER FOR DOING IT

SO... MY SPELLS ARE THE SAME... BUT MAGIC'S REFUSING TO DO MY HOMEWORK FOR ME NOW?



BASICALLY I GUESS WE SHOULD HAVE A GROUP MEETING AT MY HOUSE ABOUT IT LATER.



WHAT'RE WE, A CLUB?

BECAUSE I'M DOWN FOR THINKING UP CLUB NAMES.



"THE MAGICAL GIRLS!"

DUDE NO THAT'S NOT FAR TO JUST N.



WE'LL WORK-SHOP IT LATER. ANYWAY THERE WAS SOME THING ELSE

YOU CAN MAKE SPELLS EASIER TO CAST BY MAKING DEALS

WHAT, LIKE WITH THE DEVIL?



IT'S LIKE IF A SPELL MADE YOU STRONGER, YOU COULD TRADE ITS OPPOSITE INTELLIGENCE FOR THE DURATION OF THE ENCHANTMENT

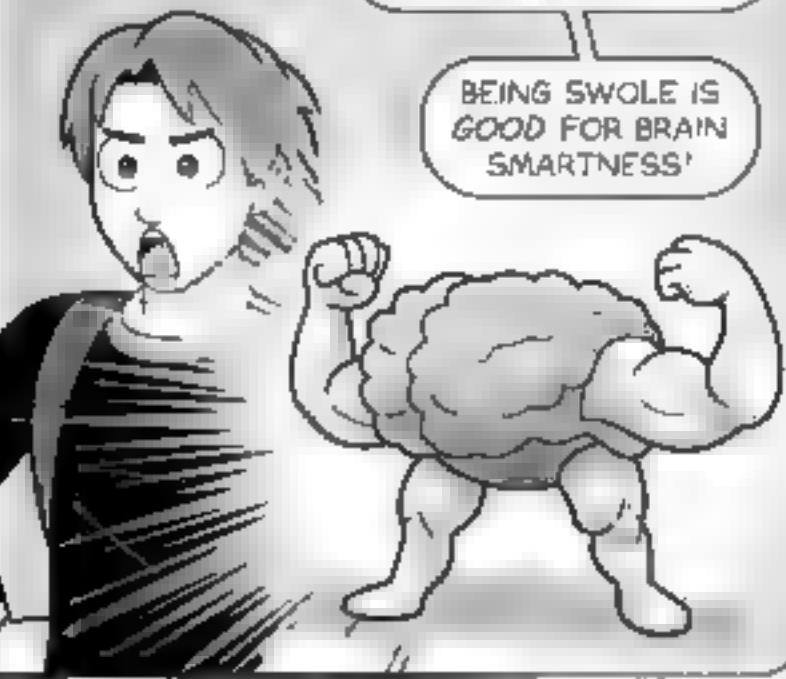
WHEN YOU MAKE A TRADE LIKE THAT THE SPELL IS EASIER TO CAST, AND THERE COULD ALSO BE OTHER BENEFITS.

FOR A TEMPORARY INTELLIGENCE DEBUFF, YOU COULD GET AN EXTRA LARGE STRENGTH BOOST!

THOSE AREN'T OPPOSITES!

EXERCISE HELPS WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND THINKING IN GENERAL!

BEING SWOLE IS GOOD FOR BRAIN SMARTNESS!



WELL, SHE ALSO SAID THE TRADE HAS TO GENUINELY MAKE SENSE TO THE USER. SO I GUESS THAT WOULDN'T WORK FOR YOU?



IT WOULDN'T? I MEAN, I DON'T NOT WANT IT AS AN OPTION FOR EXTRA STRENGTH

T'S A CHARACTER TROPE THING RIGHT? I COULD BE CONVINCED

KNOWING ABOUT THE "DUMB STRONG GUY" CHARACTER TROPE MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO TRADE INTELLIGENCE FOR BEEFIER STRENGTH SPELLS?

IT'S POSSIBLE THE TRADE JUST HAS TO MAKE SOME SENSE TO THE PERSON USING THE SPELL

LESS "I COMPLETELY BELIEVE THIS MAKES LOGICAL SENSE" AND MORE "I CAN SEE A CONNECTION"?

I ACTUALLY THINK THAT'S MORE LIKELY GIVEN HOW MAGIC IS

BESIDES, IF IT WASN'T, ANYONE WITH ANY SENSE WOULD JUST LOGIC THEMSELVES OUT OF MAKING MOST OF THOSE TRADES.



HUH. SO... IF I THOUGHT OF SOMETHING FITTING TO TRADE WHILE BECOMING CHEERLEADRA, I COULD MAKE IT MORE POWERFUL IN TIME FOR SATURDAY?

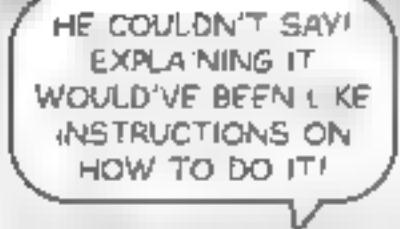
OR IS THAT WHAT THE "SHRINK AND LIMIT STRENGTH TO ONE FOR MORE POINTS" THING IS?

NO THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING ELSE. THE MAGIC GUY SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IT

BUT HE ALSO WARNED AGAINST USING IT

CHARISMA	2 ... 4!
AWARENESS	2 . 4!
TECH	2 .. 4!
STRENGTH	2 ... 4!
FIGHT	2 ... 4!
ENDURANCE	2 ... 4!
RESISTANCE	2 . 4!
TOTAL	14 . 28

+2



HE COULDN'T SAY! EXPLAINING IT WOULD'VE BEEN LIKE INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO DO IT!



OKAY, WELL, THAT GUY IS BAD AT HIS JOB BECAUSE KNOWING THERE'S A WAY TO BOOST CHEERLEADRA'S POWER MEANS I'M STUCK THINKING ABOUT IT!



HE COULD'VE JUST SAID IT WAS JUST THE SIZE-TRADE THING. BUT NOOOO, MY BRAIN'S ALL TRYING TO FIGURE THIS OUT AND...



AND I THINK I JUST DID

THE TRADE IS TURNING THE HERO FORM INTO A VILLAIN FORM.

WHAT? MORE POWER FROM A VILLAIN FORM DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!

WELL, STOP MAKING SENSE OF IT, THEN!

IT MAKES SENSE TO ME!

I CAN'T! HEROES GIVING IN TO EVIL FOR POWER IS A WHOLE THING, AND THE ENTIRE REASON I EVEN HAVE THAT FORM IS BECAUSE OF HOW I THINK ABOUT HEROES RIGHT?

AND A MAGIC MAN IS WARNING NOT TO DO IT! I CAN'T NOT MAKE SENSE OF IT!

SO BAD AT HIS JOB!

OKAY BUT WHAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE IS HOW THAT WOULD EVEN WORK

LIKE, THERE'S NO WAY IT WOULD JUST BE A COSMETIC CHANGE

AND YOU DO HAVE SECRET IDENTITY FORMS THAT AFFECT YOUR BEHAVIOR, BUT YOU CAN STILL ACT NORMALLY WHILE USING THOSE WITH JUST A LITTLE BIT OF EFFORT

THAT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE MUCH OF A COST FOR A POWER BOOST OR SOME THING TO WARN SO STRONGLY AGAINST

MY GUT SAYS IT WOULDN'T BE LIKE THAT

I MEAN I'M NOT SURE BUT

I DON'T SEE MYSELF SUDDENLY GOING "MWUH-HA HA" AND BEING A CARTOONISH BAD GUY

BUT I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING TO THIS

BRRHHHHING!

ANNNND WE NEED TO GET TO FIRST PERIOD.

MWUH-HA HA HA!
TARDINESS/ THE GREATEST OF EVIL!

WE NEED NEW WANDS, AND NEW SPELLS.

WE MUST BE ABLE TO INCAPACITATE PEOPLE WITHOUT HURTING THEM, AND TO TAKE DOWN MORE DANGEROUS TARGETS WITHOUT ALSO CAUSING COLLATERAL DAMAGE

UNTIL THEN, OUR AGENTS ARE RUNNING AROUND WITH THEIR OWN SPELLS...

...AND GUNS.

THAT'S A RECIPE FOR TRAGEDY

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GO ABOUT MAKING NEW SAFE SPELLS QUICKLY NOT WITHOUT A LOT OF DANGEROUS TESTING.

TEDD COULD PROBABLY HELP, BUT THEN TEDD WOULD BE EXPOSED TO DANGEROUS AND VIOLENT SPELLS.

TEDD MIGHT ALSO BE UNCOMFORTABLE HELPING US MAKE WEAPONS, OR OUTRIGHT OBJECT TO IT, JEOPARDIZING OUR LONG-TERM GOALS.

TEDD MUST BE KEPT HAPPY AND SAFE

THEIR POORLY DOCUMENTED INVENTION, HOWEVER, COULD MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

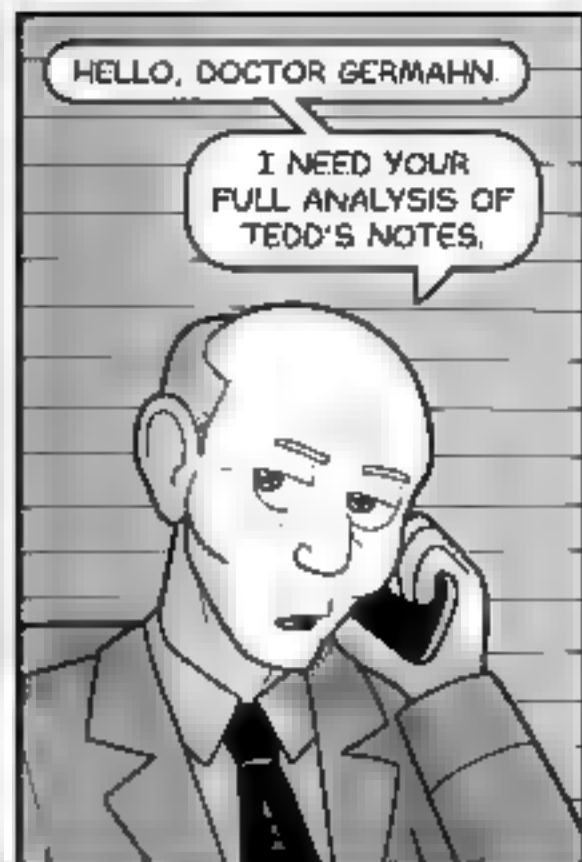
THE POTENTIAL PRECISION GAINED FROM BEING ABLE TO PROGRAM SPELLS COULD BE A GAME CHANGER.

DOCTOR GERMANN NEEDS TEDD'S CODE, AND ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TEDD HAS. BUT .

:SIGH:

HELLO, DOCTOR GERMANN.

I NEED YOUR FULL ANALYSIS OF TEDD'S NOTES.



Shortly after school ..



AS EXPECTED
OUR HEAD
SCIENTIST
FOUND A LOT
TO CRITICIZE IN
YOUR NOTES.

WE'RE ALL AWARE HOW
EVER, THAT YOU DON'T HAVE
ADVANCED TRAINING YET
AND YOU NEVER INTENDED
THESE NOTES FOR ANYONE
BUT YOURSELF

SO DON'T
TAKE THIS
TOO
HARSHLY

OF
COURSE

THE
AGONY...!



WITH ALLOWANCES MADE
FOR THOSE FACTORS, HE
SAID MOST OF YOUR NOTES
WERE DECENTLY DONE

HE IS A RATHER STRICT
PERSON, SO THIS IS
ACTUALLY HIGH PRAISE

SO,
UM.
THAT'S
GOOD?

IT IS IN ORDER TO TRULY
ASSESS WHERE YOU NEED
IMPROVEMENT, HOWEVER

WE NEED EXAMPLES
OF YOUR NOTES WRITTEN
WITH OTHER PEOPLE
READING THEM IN MIND



SPECIFICALLY WE WOULD LIKE YOU
TO REVISIT THE EXPERIMENT WITH
THE NOTES OUR HEAD SCIENTIST
WAS MOST CRITICAL OF

THE ENCHANTMENT GLOVE



IS THERE
AN ISSUE
WITH THAT
OPTION?

IT'S JUST...
I THOUGHT
THAT GLOVE
WAS HOW I
COULD
ENCHANT
THINGS.

AND THEN I
FOUND OUT IT
JUST MADE IT
A LITTLE EASIER
TO CREATE NEW
SPELLS.

I WAS... REALLY PROUD
OF THAT GLOVE BEFORE I
FOUND THAT OUT, AND I
FIGURED I WOULDN'T GET
BETTER AT ENCHANTING
IF I RELIED ON IT SO.

ALSO, THERE
WAS BARELY ANY
TIME BETWEEN
LEARNING I WAS
A SEER, AND
GIVING YOU
MY NOTES?



I HAVEN'T DONE
ANYTHING WITH
IT SINCE THEN.

LIKE, BEST
CASE SCENARIO,
I WOULD HAVE
WRITTEN "TO BE
CONTINUED" IN
MY NOTES.

AH I BELIEVE I UNDERSTAND
WHAT PERSPECTIVE YOU WERE
SEEING THIS FROM NOW

EH?

IT PROBABLY WON'T SURPRISE
YOU TO LEARN, TEDD, THAT
OUR GOVERNMENT HAS WAYS
OF MAKING WANDS OTHER
THAN GETTING ME TO DO IT

I NEVER GAVE IT
MUCH THOUGHT
I JUST ASSUMED
THERE WAS SOME
SECRET WAY TO
MAKE WANDS.

THE GLOVE WAS
JUST AN IDEA I
HAD FOR HOW I
COULD DO IT

WELL, THE SECRET
ISN'T EXCITING. IT'S
ALL JUST WANDS
MAKING MORE WANDS,
AND THEY REQUIRE
EXPERIENCED MAGIC
USERS TO BE USED
PROPERLY

SOME NON-SEER
WIZARDS WE'RE AWARE
OF HAVE BEEN ABLE
TO CREATE WANDS
WITHOUT A TOOL BUT
IT'S A RESULT OF
SPELLS THEY'VE
LEARNED, NOT AN
INNATE ABILITY AND
IT'S MORE LIMITED

WE HAVE
NOTHING AS
PRECISE AND
FOOLPROOF AS
PROGRAMMABLE
SPELLS.

REALLY? I MEAN.. THE GLOVE WAS SPECIAL
TO ME BECAUSE I THOUGHT I'D FIGURED
OUT A BUNCH OF STUFF ON MY OWN, BUT
I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS ANYTHING NEW

ALL I DID WAS
STUDY URYUOM
TECHNOLOGY,
AND MAKE SOME
THING SIMILAR
FOR HUMAN
MAGIC

I GUESS A LOT
OF IT DID HAVE
TO BE DONE
FROM SCRATCH
FOR VARIOUS
REASONS, BUT...

YOU OVERESTIMATE US,
AND UNDERESTIMATE
YOURSELF. YOU HAVE
SUCCEEDED WHERE
OTHERS HAVE FAILED

MAYBE IT'S
JUST BEEN A
WHILE SINCE
THEY TRIED?
COMPUTERS
HAVE COME A
LONG WAY.

STOP THAT
MY POINT
TEDD. IS WE
DON'T JUST
CHOOSE THE
ENCHANT
MENT GLOVE
BECAUSE ITS
NOTES NEED
IMPROVEMENT

WE CHOSE IT
BECAUSE IT HAS
SIGNIFICANT
POTENTIAL

THE WAY THINGS ARE
GOING, WANDS MIGHT
BECOME COMMON
EVERYDAY ITEMS IN
THE FUTURE

THE WORLD IS GOING TO
NEED SOMETHING LIKE YOUR
ENCHANTMENT GLOVE

WOW UM YES I
CAN DEFINITELY REVISIT
THE GLOVE THEN.

VERY GOOD. IN THE MEANTIME
WE NEED A COPY OF THE CODE

WE NEED TO ASSESS YOUR
CODING. BUT MOSTLY, OUR HEAD
SCIENTIST IS EAGER TO SEE MORE
OF HOW YOU DID THIS.

FEAR NOT YOUR NAME
WILL BE ON ANY APPLICABLE
PATENTS THAT RESULT FROM
YOUR WORK NATURALLY.
THEY'LL BE CLASSIFIED UNTIL
MAGIC IS PUBLIC BUT THE
LAST THING WE WANT TO DO
IS DISCOURAGE YOU FROM
WORKING WITH US.

I MEAN,
YES! GOOD!
VERY GOOD.

ALSO, UH. WILL I
BE JUDGED HARSHLY
FOR MY CHOICES IN
VARIABLE NAMES?

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
THAT MEANS.

IS THIS
ABOUT YOUR
PERSONAL NAME
PREFERENCES?

WHAT? NO,
IT'S... YOU
KNOW WHAT?
IT'S FINE.

ANY EXPERIENCED
PROGRAMMER HAS SEEN
OR USED WORSE.

I REMAIN
CONFUSED.
BUT WILL TAKE
YOUR WORD
FOR IT.

OKAY, GOOD.
...ALSO I NEED
TO "LOOK" AT A
WAND-MAKING
SPELL.

WHY DO
YOU NEED
THAT?
YOU'RE A
SEER

EXACTLY RIGHT NOW, THE
GLOVE JUST MAKES CUSTOM
SPELLS EASIER FOR SEERS.

FOR ALL INTENTS
AND PURPOSES, THAT'S
BASICALLY YOU, ME, AND
THAT ENGLISH KID

IF I LEARN A WAND-MAKING
SPELL, I CAN USE THE WAND-
MAKING SPELL AS A BASIS FOR
A PROGRAMMABLE WAND-MAKING
SPELL FOR THE WAND-MAKING
GLOVE SO THAT THE WAND-
MAKING GLOVE CAN DO ACTUAL
WAND-MAKING EQUAL TO OR
GREATER THAN THE WAND-
MAKING CAPABILITIES OF THE
FIRST WAND-MAKING SPELL.

IF I'M GOING TO DO THIS
PROPERLY, THE GLOVE NEEDS
TO WORK WITHOUT A SEER.

SHOCKINGLY I BELIEVE
I FOLLOWED THAT

I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GET YOU IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO A WAND-MAKING SPELL BUT I WILL TRY

WE ARE NATURALLY CAUTIOUS WITH WAND-MAKING WANDS THAT CAN CREATE MORE WAND-MAKING WANDS.

IT IS LIKELY MY SUPERIORS WILL WANT TO WAIT UNTIL YOU'RE IN YOUR LAB

WHICH IS ARGUABLY LESS SECURE THAN THE HOME OF EDWARD VERRES, BEING AT A COLLEGE, BUT IT IS A PREDICTABLE STIPULATION. IT'S LIKELY TO MAKE THEM FEEL BETTER ABOUT IT



I GUESS THAT'S NOT SURPRISING...

I'LL SEND YOU THE CODE I ALREADY HAVE, AND FOCUS ON EXPERIMENTS WITH CODING SPELLS FOR NOW, THEN.

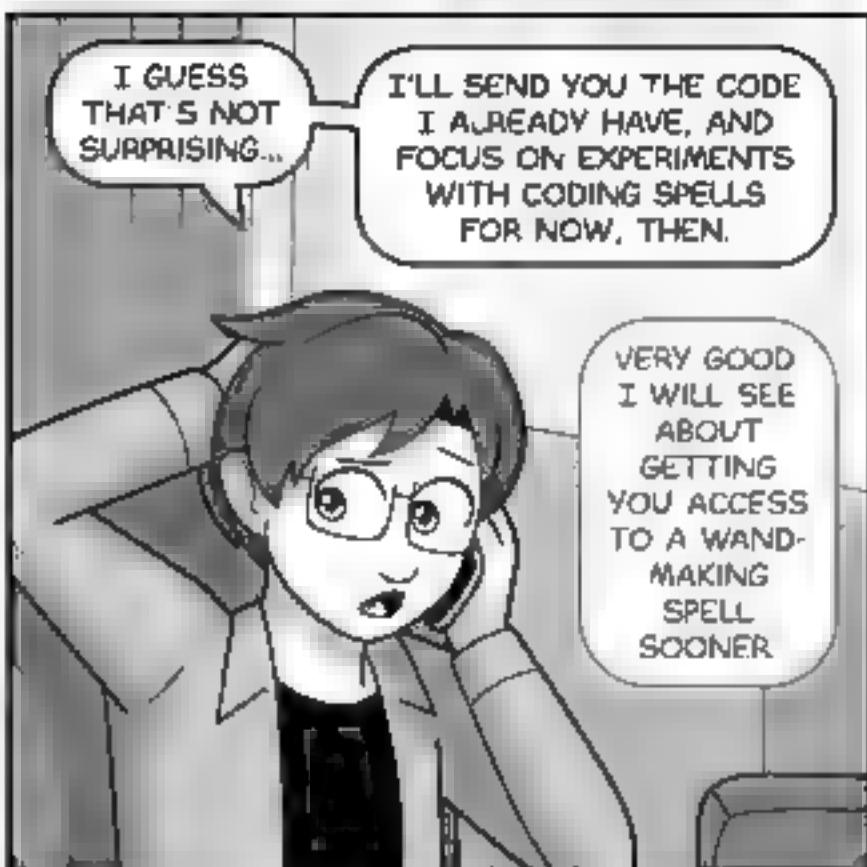
VERY GOOD I WILL SEE ABOUT GETTING YOU ACCESS TO A WAND-MAKING SPELL SOONER

I'D BEST LET YOU GO IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS. YOU CAN CALL ME

I WILL GET IN CONTACT WHEN I GET AN ANSWER ABOUT THE WAND-MAKING SPELL.

OKAY, UH, BYE?

GOODBYE



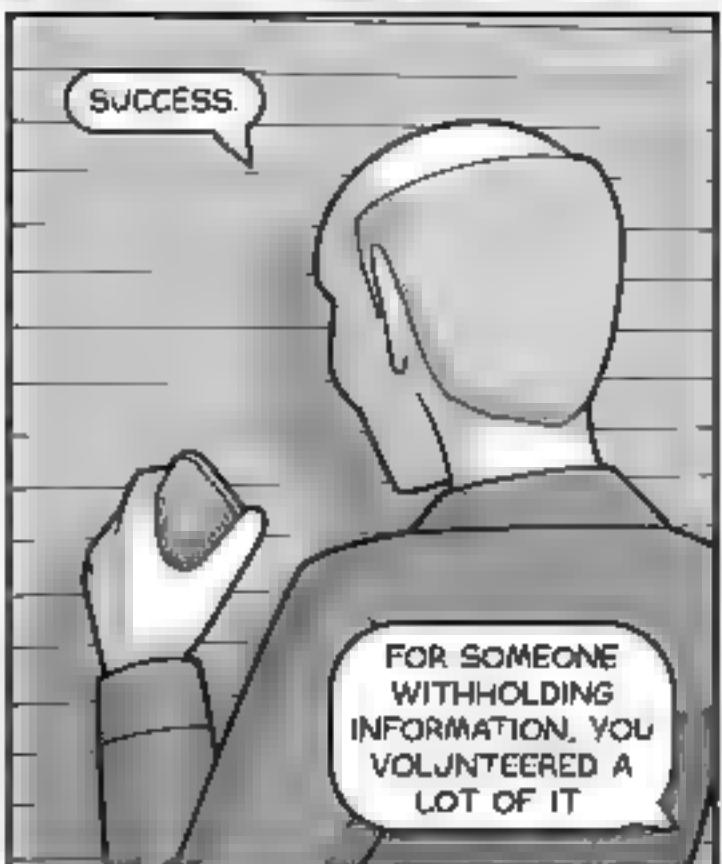
SUCCESS.

FOR SOMEONE WITHHOLDING INFORMATION, YOU VOLUNTEERED A LOT OF IT

IF IT'S ALREADY CERTAIN SOMEONE WILL LEARN OF SOMETHING, IT IS SOMETIMES BETTER TO VOLUNTEER IT

NOTHING IS LOST, AND TRUST IS GAINED, BY TEDD KNOWING THOSE THINGS.

WHAT WAS IMPORTANT WAS TO NOT MENTION OUR IMMEDIATE INTENT TO CREATE WEAPONS AS IT WOULD RISK ALIENATING TEDD



OUR INTENT IS TO CREATE NON-LETHAL WEAPONS IN PLACE OF GUNS.

WOULD TEDD NOT BE PROUD TO ASSIST WITH THAT?

NON-LETHAL IS A M.SNOMER. LESS-LETHAL IS MORE ACCURATE

NOT WITH PROPERLY WORKING MAGIC.

IN ANY CASE THERE IS A CHANCE THAT PEOPLE WILL BE HURT, OR WORSE, IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND FIELD USE, OF THESE SPELLS.

MOSTLY, YES, BUT AS WE'VE RECENTLY BEEN REMINDED THERE CAN BE X-FACTORS

WE ALSO NEED SPELLS FOR MORE DANGEROUS TARGETS, AND THERE WON'T BE ANYTHING LESS-LETHAL ABOUT THOSE SPELLS IF USED ON HUMANS

TEDD IS ONE OF US NOW, BUT THEY ARE NEW, YOUNG, AND SENSITIVE.

WHAT'S MORE, THEY HAVE A RARE TALENT COMBINED WITH IMPRESSIVE SKILLS.

KEEPING TEDD HAPPY IS A PRIORITY

WE CANNOT RISK THEM HAVING A MORAL QUANDARY RIGHT NOW

THEY MUST BE EASED INTO THE DARKER SIDE OF WHAT WE DO

GRADUALLY TAUGHT TO ACCEPT WHAT IS NECESSARY

HMPH LUCKY THEM.

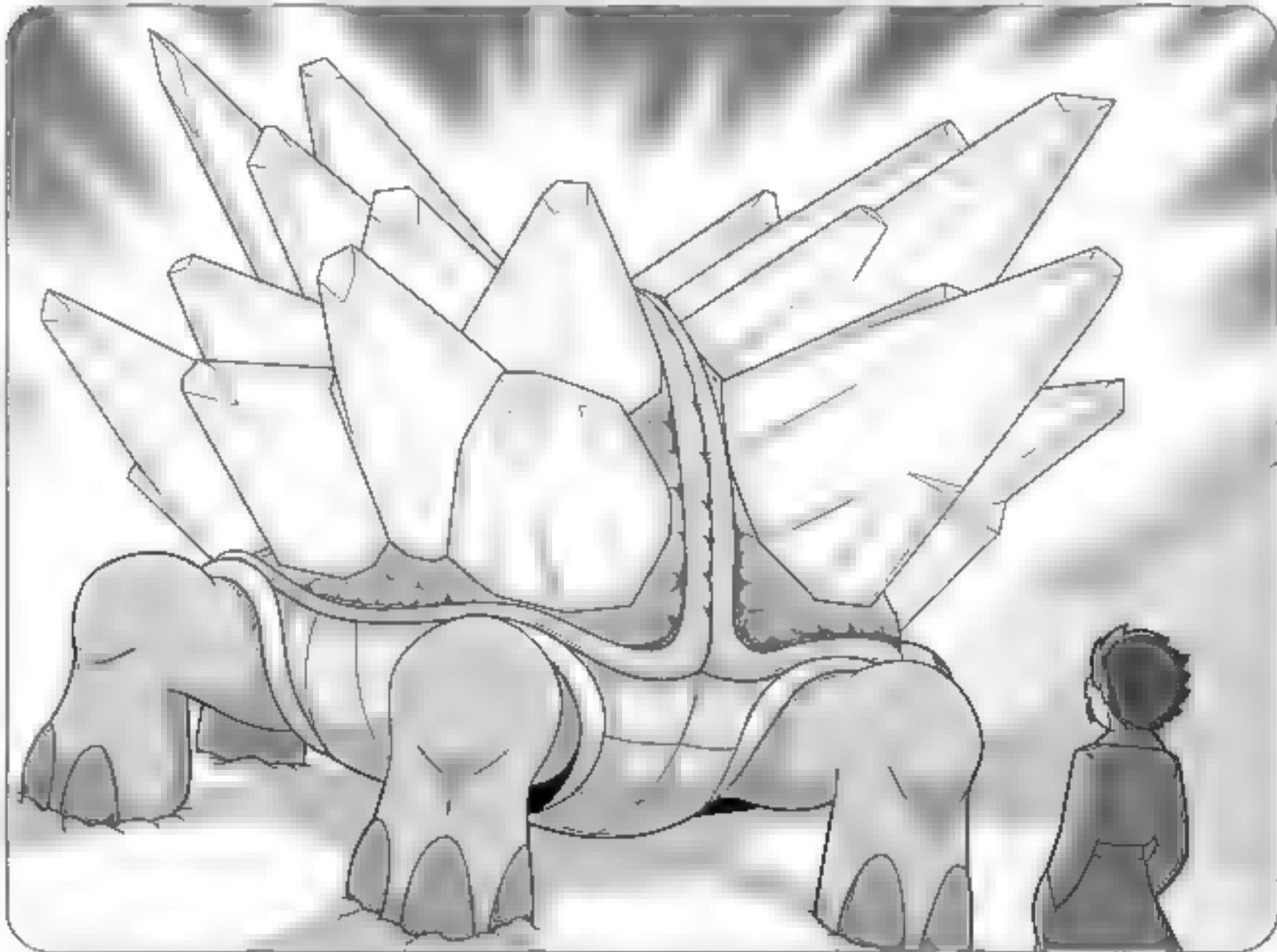
YES, GIVEN YOUR INTRODUCTION TO MAGIC, IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE YOU WOULD FIND THAT IRRITATING.

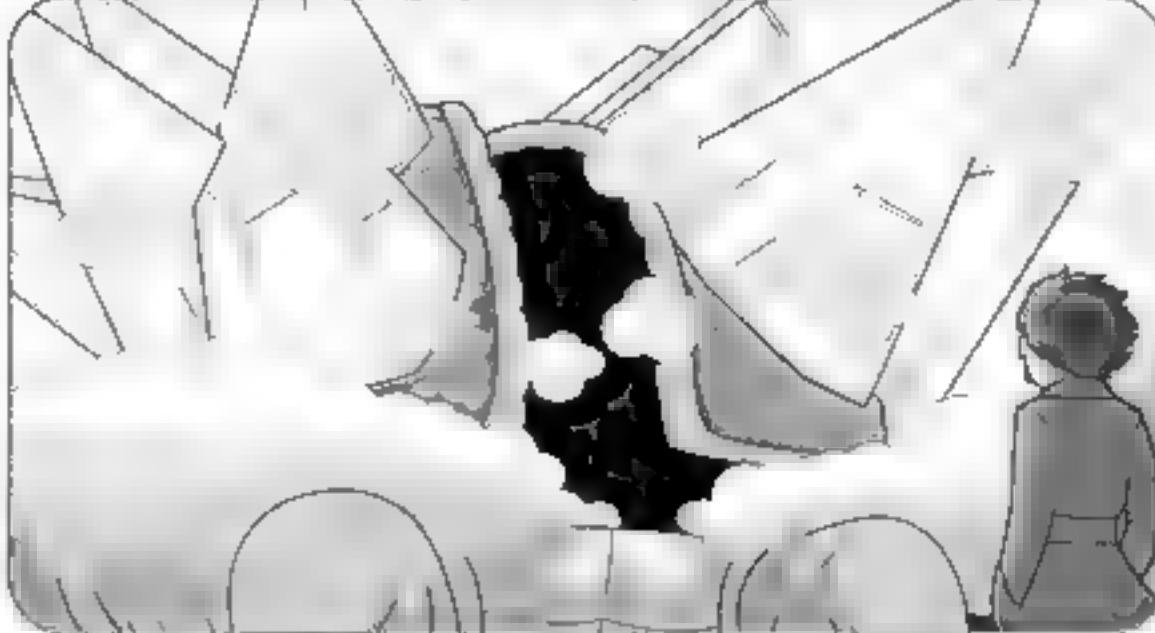
PART OF MY JOB, HOWEVER, IS KNOWING WHAT MY PEOPLE NEED IN ORDER TO FUNCTION AT THEIR BEST

IT IS SOMETHING YOU WILL NEED TO MASTER IF YOU ARE TO HAVE THIS JOB SOMEDAY, BISHOP

PAMPERING NEW BLOOD WITH RARE TALENTS.

I KNEW YOUR JOB HAD TO HAVE DOWNSIDES.





IT'S NOT A
GIANT TURTLE.



IT'S MORE OF
A MYSTERIOUS
MONSTROSITY...

THAT
ALWAYS
HAS GRIM
TIDINGS.



GOOD NEWS!

WHAT



Some time and several antics later...



I SUPPOSE IT MAKES SENSE THAT MY DAD WOULDN'T TRUST ARTHUR.

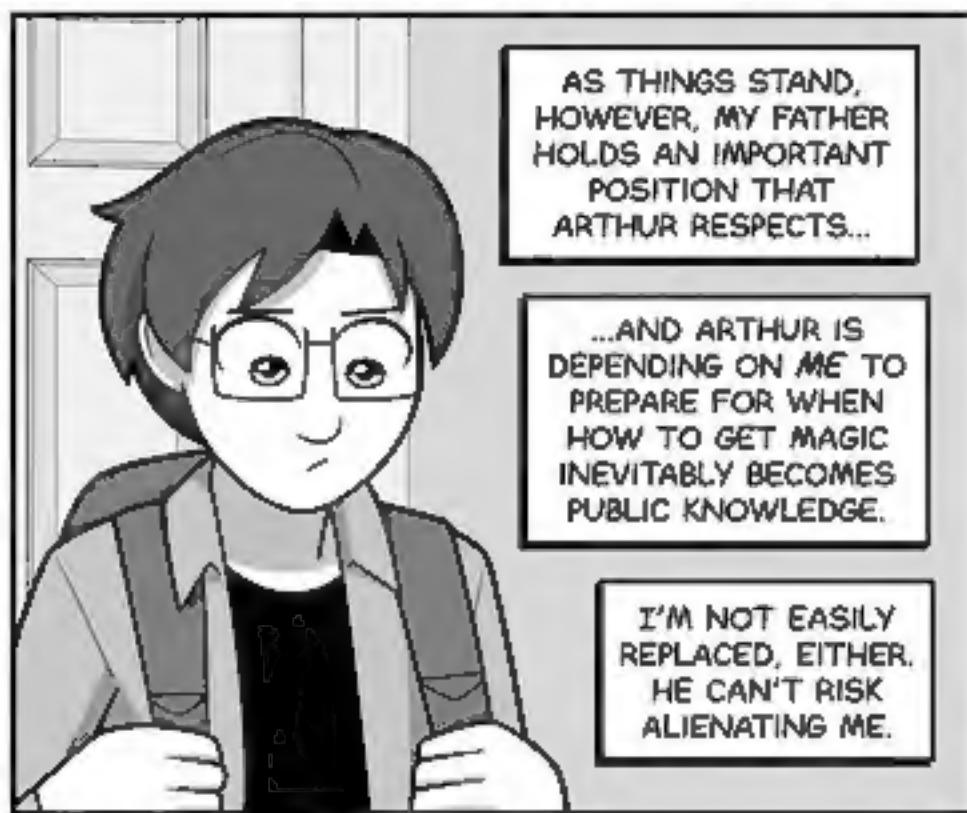
MY FATHER BELIEVES IN HELPING EVERYONE. HE WILL GO OUT OF HIS WAY, AND TAKE RISKS, TO HELP OUT INDIVIDUALS.

ARTHUR BELIEVES IN THE NEEDS OF THE MANY OUTWEIGHING THE NEEDS OF THE FEW, AND ISN'T WILLING TO TAKE AS MANY RISKS TO HELP JUST ONE PERSON.



NEITHER IS GOING TO BE RIGHT ALL THE TIME, AND NEITHER WILL FULLY TRUST THE OTHER TO DO WHAT HE THINKS IS RIGHT.

AND YEAH, IF THINGS WERE DIFFERENT? ARTHUR WOULD NOT BE A RELIABLE ALLY. HE'D THROW US UNDER A BUS IF HE THOUGHT IT WAS FOR THE GREATER GOOD.



AND HE REALLY DOES SEEM LIKE A GOOD PERSON WHO'S FELT CORNERED INTO DOING THINGS HE HATES TO PROTECT PEOPLE!

HIS BIG DREAM RIGHT NOW IS JUST TO RETIRE AGAIN WITHOUT LEAVING A MESS!



THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO NOT TRUST HIM RIGHT NOW!

NOT THAT I'M GOING TO GAMBLE GRACE ON THAT.

IF DAD WANTS TO SAY HE HAD WEIRD MAGIC DREAMS WITH A MAGIC DREAM WIZARD, GO DAD.



WITHOUT KNOWING SPECIFICS, THERE'S NOT A LOT I CAN SAY ABOUT ALL THAT...

BUT IF SOMETHING IS GENUINELY NECESSARY, ISN'T IT GOOD TO--

SLAM

NO.

THAT IS A TRAP.

THE QUICKEST PATH TO TRUE EVIL IS TO FORGET WHAT EVIL IS.

IN ALL OF OUR LIVES, THERE WILL BE MOMENTS WHEN THERE ARE ONLY BAD OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM.

THE EASIEST PATH IS TO MAKE EXCUSES. TO SAY THE LEAST EVIL OPTION IS GOOD.

THE MORE YOU SAY IT, THE MORE YOU BELIEVE IT, AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT...

YOU DON'T SEE IT AS EVIL ANYMORE.

YOU STOP LOOKING FOR OTHER OPTIONS.

I MAY BE A MONSTER, BUT I KEEP LOOKING FOR THE OTHER OPTION.

YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE OTHERWISE.

YOU, TEDD, ARE THE OTHER OPTION.

YOU HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO MAKE MONSTERS LIKE ME UNNECESSARY.